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Gk 62,810


SIGILL: COLL: HARVARD: CANTAB: NOV: ANGL: 1650
CHRISTO ET ECCLESIÆ
N. Hurd Sc.
BOSTON.



Rec. Feb. 25. 1832.

THE

ILIAD OF HOMER,

TRANSLATED

BY

WILLIAM SOTHEBY.

Ὁ δὲ θεῖος Ὅμηρος ἀπὸ τῆ τιμὴν καὶ κλέος ἔσχε, πλὴν τοῦθ' ὅτι χρὴ ἕδιδαξε; ARIST. RAN.

Trojani belli scriptorem ———
Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius et melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit. HOR. Ep. I. 2.

TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.
MDCCCXXXI.

GK62,810

THE THIRTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Hector defeats the Grecians.—Neptune in the similitude of Calchas reanimates them.—Idomeneus highly distinguished.—The battle rages with mutual slaughter.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XIII.

When Jove had led fierce Hector's conquering host
Where Hellas' routed army throng'd the coast,
The Thunderer left their unassisted might
Mid the dire woes and toil of ceaseless fight,
And turn'd the lustre of his eye, where Thrace
For battle rear'd her steeds' unrivall'd race,
Or, in close war, where Mysia's sons excell,
Or, where in peace the Hippemolgians dwell,
Who, fed on milk, their blissful life prolong,
And cleave to right a guilty world among:
Nor deign'd to cast a backward glance again
On Priam's city, and Troy's woeful plain:
For none—Jove deem'd—no god would dare descend,
None aid a Trojan, none a Greek defend.

But not in vain, on Samothracia's height,
Keen Neptune watch'd, and wonder'd at the fight:

Thence, all the region that encompass'd Ide,
Troy, and the fleet of Greece, the god descried.
He view'd, and pitying Hellas, fill'd with ire,
Rush'd down the steep, nor reck'd the Olympian sire.
The mountains stagger'd, and the forests bow'd
Beneath the foot of the descending god.
Thrice, with swift step, the monarch downward strode,
The fourth now rests on Ægæ's far abode,
Where, in its bay profound, the billows roll'd
O'er his imperishable dome of gold.
There Neptune yok'd the steeds, whose golden mane
Wav'd o'er their brazen hoofs, and swept the plain:
Then mail'd in golden panoply of war,
Grasp'd his bright scourge, and onward urg'd his car,
That smoothly glided, while along the waves,
From the deep darkness of unfathom'd caves,
Huge whales on every side, with gamboling bound
Leapt, conscious of their king, his steeds around.
The sea, with joy dividing, smooth'd the way
Where, mid the glassy main, his passage lay:
There, as they flew, his steeds no brine upcast,
Nor ocean bath'd his axle as it past.

Where, nigh the fleet, beneath the ocean bed,
A cave mid Tenedos and Imbrus spread,

There Neptune loos'd his steeds, and heap'd their food,
Ambrosia stor'd for heaven's ethereal brood,
Then, to await him, round their fetlocks roll'd
Indissoluble fetters fram'd of gold.

Now Neptune join'd the Greeks, while fierce as fire,
Or whirlwind blast, resistless in its ire,
Troy's furious sons, and all their leagued force
Rush'd with mad shouts, where Hector led their course:
Rush'd—for they deem'd that all the Grecians slain
Would mid their captur'd fleet heap Phrygia's plain.

But from the deep the god who rocks the globe,
And round the world winds his circumfluent robe,
In Calchas' voice and form the Greeks inspir'd,
And with fresh rage each raging Ajax fir'd:

" Brave warriors! now unnerv'd by flight or fear,
" Guardians of Greece! your former fame revere.
" Elsewhere, I dread not Troy, tho' band on band
" Pour o'er yon wall, and dare us hand to hand:
" There will our host resist: but chiefly here
" A mightier danger wakes a warrior's fear.
" Lo! Hector rages like a flame of fire:
" Hark!—how he vaunts his birth, his heav'nly sire.

" Oh that some god would aid, would steel your breast
" To stand yourselves, and animate the rest:
" Then from your fleet would Hector fly, tho' Jove
" Held o'er his brow the Ægis from above."

He spake: and striking with his sceptre, fill'd
Their limbs with strength, and godlike pow'r instill'd.
Their hands, their feet were lighten'd of their load,
And each elastic limb confest the god—
Then, as a hawk, on wings outstretcht for flight,
Sweeps from a promontory's topmost height,
Wins through the void of air his way unheard,
And strikes with sudden death a flying bird,
Thus Neptune sped, and, as he past from view,
Th' Oilean first the form celestial knew,
And thus to Ajax cried, " A present god,
" Who bad to guard the fleet, before us trod.
" 'Twas not the Seer, not Calchas—I pursu'd
" No mortal man in man's similitude,
" But visibly, at his departure, trac'd
" The glory that the god divinely grac'd.
" How doubt his influence?—feel I not the glow
" That burns for battle, and provokes the foe?
" These hands, these feet are lighten'd of their load,
" And each elastic limb proclaims the god."

" I, too"—Great Ajax cried—" I feel the flame,
" More firm I grasp the lance, and poise its aim.
" I tread on air, and thrill with keen desire,
" I, sole, to quench in blood th' Hectorean fire."

Such their bold speech: so Neptune's strong controul
Had fill'd with joy each battle-breathing soul.
Then to the fleet the Sea-God onward prest,
Call'd forth the chiefs, and rous'd from needful rest:
The war-worn chiefs, whose sufferings claim'd repose,
Yet tenfold suffer'd in their nation's woes:
And when they heard from far the turrets fall,
And view'd the Trojans pouring o'er the wall,
They, tears of deep despair in secret shed,
And deem'd themselves now number'd with the dead—
But Neptune interven'd, and arm'd again
Phalanx on phalanx for the battle-plain,
Bold Teucer first, and Leitus inspir'd,
Peneleus, Thoas, and Deipyrus fir'd,
Breath'd in Meriones the warrior's flame,
And urg'd Antilochus once more to fame:
Mid these, the Ocean Lord, exhorting, spoke,
And in each breast war's kindling glow awoke:

" Shame! youthful chiefs! on you my soul relied,
" Deem'd our fleets safe, and Troy's whole force defied.

" Shame!—if you now recede, ere set yon sun
" Beholds you slain, and Troy's proud victory won.
" Heav'ns! do I live, and view a wonder wrought,
" Such as in dream ne'er floated on my thought,
" View raging mid our ships the Trojan race,
" Who fled like fawns, whom wolves and lynxes chase,
" And to and fro in wildering terror stray,
" Nor born for battle, dare withstand the fray.
" Such once the Trojans, who before our sight
" Fled ere our near approach, nor paus'd on flight,
" Now, by our leader's fault, or our delay,
" Far from their Troy they rush on our array,
" The while our warriors, with their king at strife,
" Yield, mid their ships, their undefended life.
" What tho' the host his insolence proclaim,
" And on his rash misdeed hurl righteous blame,
" What tho' his pride dar'd great Pelides slight,
" Must we, like dastards, turn, and fly the fight?
" Forgive—forgiveness best becomes the brave:
" Rush on the Trojans, speed, your navy save—
" Go in your glory—you, of Hellas' train
" Most fam'd in arms, your fame in arms sustain—
" The base may fly: but oh!—if you retire,
" Rage will consume my heart with quenchless fire.
" Reflect what doom hangs o'er us: woe on woe
" Must more and more from your delay o'erflow.

" Let shame, revenge, to each fresh force supply,
" Like men go forth, and dare like men to die.
" Lo! mid our fleet, 'tis Hector pours the war,
" Sweeps, thundering, thro' the gates, and bursts the bar."

Thus rous'd, the Grecian warriors, undismay'd,
Throng'd round each Ajax, and their strength array'd:
A chosen host: Mars such had ne'er reprov'd,
Nor Pallas, when in arms, the goddess mov'd.
They stood: 'gainst Troy and Hector kept the field,
Condensing lance on lance, and shield on shield:
Ranks clos'd on ranks, on phalanx phalanx prest,
Man clash'd on man, shield shield, and crest on crest:
And from their casques high cones, that brighly beam'd,
O'er the dense mass the horse-hair darkly stream'd,
And as they forward mov'd, each radiant spear
That quiver'd in their grasp bad Troy draw near.
And lo! the Trojans;—Hector, at their head,
First in fierce onset rush'd, by victory led.
Swift as a rock that on a mountain lower'd,
Riv'n by swoln floods, and in their rush o'erpower'd,
Bursts all obstructions, bounds from steep to steep,
Strows the crush'd wood, that thunders to its sweep,
And, onward, ceaselessly, and onward rolls,
Till the smooth plain its less'ning speed controuls:

Thus Hector flew, thus rush'd to reach the main,
The navy captur'd, and the Grecians slain,
Then—staid—vain striving—where athwart his way
Phalanx on phalanx lock'd their dense array.
Each sword was brandish'd, and each pointed spear
Aim'd at his breast repell'd his fierce career:
With forc'd foot, staggering back, the chief retir'd,
While thus his voice, far heard, the Trojans fir'd:

" Ye Trojans, Lycians, Dardans, band on band,
" Be firm: not long shall Greece my force withstand:
" Tho' serried every rank, each phalanx clos'd,
" They shall not long resist, by me oppos'd,
" This lance shall turn their host, and chase their flight,
" If Hector moves in Jove's o'ershadowing might."

His voice in all fresh fortitude inspir'd,
But chief of all a son of Priam fir'd,
Deiphobus, swift issuing to the field,
Hid by the huge circumference of his shield.
Against him, moving on in bold advance,
Meriones hurl'd forth his well-aim'd lance,
And smote his shield's huge orb, but ere the stroke
Pierc'd the bull-hide, the shaft in shivers broke.

But Priam's son, in terror of his foe
Stretch'd out the shield, and warded off the blow.
Then, in stern rage, mid Hellas' sheltering host,
Bereft of victory, and his weapon lost,
Back to his tent, Meriones withdrew,
A firmer lance to wield, and war renew:
The while fierce battle rag'd, foes rush'd on foes,
And loud and louder war's wild roar uprose.

Then Teucer first stretch'd breathless on the ground
Brave Imbrius, Mentor's son, for steeds renown'd.
He, ere to Ilion sail'd the flow'r of Greece,
In rich Pedæus dwelt, and reign'd in peace,
With Medescasta blest, his beauteous bride,
To Priam's race, by lawless love allied—
But when to Troy her numbers Hellas sent,
For Troy's defence the willing hero went,
In Priam's palace dwelt, by all approv'd,
Liv'd with his sons, and as a son belov'd—
Him, in the van, the Telamonian spear
Smote, and with deadliest wound transfixt his ear.
As a young ash, that tower'd afar on sight,
Fell'd by the axe upon the mountain height,
Lies with its vernal leaves, thus swept away,
All beautiful in death young Imbrius lay:

Loud rang his arms: to spoil him, Teucer flew;
Then, Hector's rage his lance preventive threw:
But on its flight the chief the shaft descried
And, scarcely death eluding, turn'd aside:
It glanc'd, and pierc'd Antimachus' breast,
And laid the warrior in death's dreamless rest,
The Son of Cteatus, from Actor sprung,
And as he fell, afar his armour rung.
Then Hector rush'd from his defenceless head
To pluck the polish'd helm, and spoil the dead;
But Ajax, on the victor's swift advance,
Against him hurl'd the burden of his lance,
But fail'd to pierce, so closely mail'd around,
The chief, all brass, defied the deadly wound:—
But on the boss of the Hectorean shield
Such its vast weight, that back the warrior reel'd,
Reel'd back, and scar'd by its terrific force
Left, where they lay on earth, each unspoil'd corse.
But Mnestheus, Stichius, who th' Athenians led,
Slow dragg'd Antimachus from forth the dead;
While, as two lions rend a goat away
From sharp-tooth'd dogs, that round them vainly bay,
And thro' dark thickets, and the pathless wood,
High bear it in their jaws, distilling blood,
Thus the Ajaces Imbrius' corse upbore,
And from his limbs in rage his armour tore:

And in stern vengeance for their comrade dead,
From the fair neck th' Oilean smote his head,
And, like a ball, in scornful fury whirl'd,
In dust before the feet of Hector hurl'd.

Then, as, deep wrathful for his grandson slain,
Sped to their fleet the monarch of the main,
In Hellas' host fresh courage to inspire,
And pour on Troy's proud sons celestial ire;
The Cretan king to battle boldly trod,
And met on his advance the Ocean God.
He came, where, lately from the conflict led,
His wounded friend lay bleeding in his bed,
But, ere he left the tent, the monarch gave
The skilful leach strict charge to tend the brave;
Then, breathing war, as on the hero prest,
The Ocean Lord Idomeneus addrest:
His voice, like Thoas, fam'd Andræmon's son,
Who rul'd the state of rock-built Calydon,
O'er Pleuron's wide extent just sway maintain'd,
And, like a god, o'er all the Ætolians reign'd:

"Where, Cretan king, where now the threat'ning boast
"That burst from Greece on Troy's invaded coast?"

" Oh, Thoas, none,"—Idomeneus reply'd,—
" Not man the cause, none turn from war aside—
" All bravely fight—no heart-debasing fear,
" Nor sloth enchains us, when our foes appear.
" 'Tis Jove who dooms us, from our native land,
" To die inglorious on this Phrygian strand.
" But thou, still mindful of thy former fame,
" That rous'd the rest to emulate thy name,
" Cease not thyself: and in each heart inspire
" A kindling spark of thy heroic fire."

" Ne'er"—cried the Sea God—" ne'er return again,
" That Grecian warrior from Troy's hostile plain,
" Feast on his limbs, fierce dogs, and rend his corse,
" Who wilfully this day remits his force!
" But, speed—thy armour brace—yon foes assail,
" If our united pow'rs may yet avail.
" 'Tis strength, when two, tho' singly weak, unite,
" And we, each singly oft, have quell'd the brave in fight."

He spake: and hurried where the battle burn'd,
Back to his tent the Cretan king return'd:
Brac'd his bright armour on, and proudly wav'd
Two radiant spears, and Troy's fierce onset brav'd.
And, as the lightning, from rent heav'n above
Flashes in red vibrations, lanch'd by Jove,

When to earth's guilty sons th' Olympian Sire
Makes visible his wrath in flames of fire:
Thus, as the king to battle onward prest,
Flash'd the refulgent brass that mail'd his breast.
But as the monarch, from his tent withdrew,
Meriones, approaching, met his view.

"Why, Molus's son, most lov'd," the monarch cried,
"Why turns thy dauntless foot from war aside?
"Art thou too wounded? Feel'st thou yet the lance,
"Whose barbed point forbids thy bold advance?
"Or com'st to me on mission?—Not in vain—
"I speed: nor longer here in peace remain."

"Monarch!—I seek"—Meriones replied—
"If yet thy tent for me a spear provide:
"My lance, that smote Deiphobus's shield,
"Broke off in shivers ere I left the field."

"Not one, but twenty, there at will obtain:
"So shine my walls with spears from Trojans slain.
"'Tis not my wont when host meets host, afar
"To fight, as half resolv'd, and pause on war.
"Hence, many a hawberk mine, and bossy shield,
"Spears, and high tow'ring helms, that daunt the field."

" Mine, too"—the chief replied—" Troy's glorious spoils,
" Each trophy witness of my battle toils.
" These in my tent repose—far off the way:
" And the keen conflict now forbids delay—
" Nor am I wont with feeble arm to smite,
" Lurk in the rear, and hesitate on fight:
" But—from the vanward, with preventive blow
" Rush, and encounter first the foremost foe.
" If others know me not: thou, king, attest:
" And be, what thou hast seen, by thee confest."

" Why this to me?"—the Cretan monarch said—
" Oft have I seen thy fortitude display'd—
" And— were it now our charge, from Hellas' host
" To choose a chief, most brave, determin'd most,
" To join the ambush, where distinct appear
" The hero's courage, and the dastard's fear,
" Where coward cheeks no constant hue retain,
" Where the pulse wavers in the coward's vein,
" Where cowards shift their momentary seat,
" Cow'r, with bow'd knees, and back-reverted feet,
" Sigh feebly forth their palpitating breath,
" And mark, by chattering teeth, th' approach of death:
" But where the brave their colour keep, nor dread,
" Once fix'd in station on their ambush'd bed—

" But keen on watch await the sign to rise,
" Dash on the foe, and drink their dying cries:
" There, none dare blame,—far rather, all proclaim
" Thy dauntless soul, and deeds that challenge fame.
" And wert thou wounded, or far off, or near,
" Or by the arrowy flight, or close hurl'd spear,
" Not in thy neck the dart would basely rest,
" But—mid the van of battle, in thy breast.
" But cease we now vain parley.—Speed, away!
" The shock of clashing hosts forbids delay.
" Speed! lest some chief indignantly reprove:
" Take from my tent a lance.—I onward move."

He spake: Meriones like Mavors flew,
And swiftly from the tent a war-spear drew,
Then ardent for the battle onward sped,
And trac'd the path where Crete's brave monarch led.
As when the god of war, in fiery rage,
Goes forth in arms, and maddens to engage,
His son, grim Terror, wields the gory spear,
That quails the bravest heart, and fills with fear,
What time they issue from the wilds of Thrace,
Mid the fierce Ephyri, or the Phlegyan race,
And, by both hosts invok'd, at pleasure yield
To each in turn, the glory of the field:

Thus the bold chiefs to battle undismay'd
Rush'd forth, and flam'd in radiant mail array'd.

" Son of Deucalion!" his brave follower said,
" Where shall we join our host, where chiefly aid?
" At either flank, or in their mid array?
" Lo! the left labours: speed we there our way."

" Our chiefs"—the King replied—" most bold, most brave,
" The centre guard, their force our fleet can save.
" Each Ajax there, and on that battle ground
" Teucer, mid Hellas' chiefs, chief most renown'd,
" To wing the arrowy flight, or dare the field,
" Where, in close combat, shield encounters shield.
" These can fierce Hector's utmost force engage,
" And quench, in all its strength, his fiery rage.
" Not light th' Hectorean toil, tho' dread his ire,
" Such chiefs to quell, and set our fleet on fire,
" Unless, in lightning hurl'd, Jove's flaming hand
" Lanch on our ships th' exterminating brand.
" Great Ajax yields to none who draw their birth
" From mortal men, and taste the fruits of earth:
" None whom the sword can pierce, or feel the wound,
" When rocky fragments hurl them to the ground:

" Nor—tho' less fleet, would deign the glory yield,
" E'en to Pelides, in the close fought field.
" Now join the left: or fame to Ilion give,
" Or from her heroes slain fresh fame receive."

Then, swift as Mars, the chief his monarch led
Where the left labour'd, and the carnage spread;
The Trojans, as they view'd, where, fierce as flame,
In radiant mail the king and chieftain came,
With hideous uproar rush'd, nor fear'd to meet
The strength of Hellas at her station'd fleet.
As rais'd by storms, in summer's sultry day,
When suffocating dust hides all the way,
A dense cloud stands aloft, thus densely rose
The darkness from the shock of clashing foes.
One aim alike in all, one mad desire,
In death to quench the vengeance of their ire.
The battle burn'd, and raging more and more,
Bristled with spears that drank each other's gore.
Shield blaz'd on shield, and wide the brazen light
Flash'd o'er the field, and dim'd th' o'erdazzled sight;
On radiant helmets radiant helmets gleam'd,
And bright on beaming hawberks hawberks beam'd:
And hard his heart, who, gladly, unamaz'd,
Had seen that strife, nor shudder'd as he gaz'd.

Two sons of Saturn diversely inclin'd,
Each to the adverse host dire woes design'd.
Jove, for Pelides' fame, bade Hellas yield
To Hector and his host that well-fought field,
Yet would not Greece destroy, but will'd alone
At Thetis' pray'r to glorify her son.
But Ocean's god, who left, unseen, the wave,
To Hellas' sons fresh strength and courage gave:
And griev'd at Troy's success, and fill'd with ire,
Dar'd fearlessly withstand the Olympian sire.
Both of one race, yet born in earlier day,
Jove, by high knowledge, gain'd superior sway.
Hence Neptune came unseen, and unreveal'd
In man's similitude the god conceal'd.

Thus, o'er each host, the gods, in mutual hate,
Drew the dire net of war, and ruthless fate,
Link'd to fell death th' indissoluble chain,
And widely spread o'er many a warrior slain.
Now brave Idomeneus, untam'd by age,
Rous'd Hellas urg'd, and curb'd the Trojan rage:
And slew Othryoneus, who, fir'd by fame,
Late, leagu'd with Priam, from Cabesus came:
Came in fond hope to gain Cassandra's charms,
And clasp, undower'd, the virgin in his arms.

He woo'd, and vow'd, the king's assent to gain,
His host should chase the Greeks from Phrygia's plain.
On Priam's gained assent the youth relied,
And bravely led his host, and Greece defied.

Him, in the van, elate, in proud advance,
Idomeneus transfixt with radiant lance,
Thro' his brass hawberk pierc'd his groin, and hurl'd
The chief untimely to the viewless world.
Loud o'er his fall his arms resounding rung,
And loud the victor's boast, and taunting tongue:

"Othryoneus! I laud thee o'er mankind,
"So thou consummate all that fir'd thy mind,
"And gain the Dardan maid—Yet Grecian charms,
"Atrides' fairest child shall bless thy arms,
"From Argos brought, if thou, for her, destroy,
"With Hellas' sons, the sacred walls of Troy.
"But, come, brave wooer! follow to our fleet,
"Prove there what grateful sires thy proffers greet."

He spake, and from the slaughter widely spread,
Dragg'd by the feet the corse to spoil the dead.
Prompt to avenge, and bold to thwart his aim,
On foot, before the king, fierce Asius came,

While his brave guide, in all their foaming speed,
Rein'd, panting on his neck, each fiery steed.
As Asius aim'd the blow, the monarch smote
With swifter weapon, and transfixt his throat.
As by the new edg'd steel's decisive stroke,
Falls on the mountain heights a far-spread oak,
Poplar, or pine tree, fit to form a mast,
Before his steeds thus Asius breath'd his last,
Fierce ground his teeth, and with convulsive hand
Grasp'd, streaming with his blood, the furrow'd land.
His charioteer, o'ercome with wild affright,
Nor dar'd resist, nor wheel'd his car for flight:
But as he linger'd thus in senseless trance,
Antilochus against him pois'd his lance,
And pierc'd his bowels: nor him ought avail'd,
The brazen hawberk that the warrior mail'd;
Prone from his car he fell: and Nestor's son
Drove to the fleet his steeds in battle won.
For Asius slain, Deiphobus, enrag'd,
Against Idomeneus fierce conflict wag'd,
And lanch'd his forceful spear; but, keen of view,
The Cretan monarch mark'd it as it flew,
And underneath his shield, whose massive round,
With brass refulgent, and tough bull-hides bound,
Spread, doubly-handled, wholly hid from sight,
Heard the shaft whizz along its airy flight,

And, glancing on the brazen border, yield
A thrilling tinkle where it touch'd the shield.
The dart, that glanc'd aside, not idly flew,
But, born of Hippasus, Hypsenor slew:
Pierc'd thro' the liver, instantaneous death
Loos'd all his limbs, and clos'd at once his breath.
The chief, o'erjoy'd, in scornful triumph cried,
" Not unaveng'd, not vainly, Asius died:
" His spirit shall rejoice: I gave the blow,
" And sent the guide to herald him below."

Shock'd at his loud-tongu'd vaunt, all Hellas' host,
But, chief, Antilochus deep-felt his boast,
Yet left not there the slain, but o'er him spread
Th' o'ershadowing targe, and wheel'd around the dead;
Till from the tumult of the battle plain
His friends deep grieving drew their comrade slain,
Till Echius' son and brave Alastor bore
His corse to Hellas' tents and guarded shore.
Yet not Idomeneus relax'd his might,
But, raging more and more, provok'd the fight,
Firm fix'd some chief to slay, or, stern in death,
While o'er him rung his armour, close his breath.
That time Alcathous, Æsyeta's son,
Against the Cretan king rush'd dauntless on:

Heroic youth, to whose connubial arms
Anchises gave Hippodamia's charms,
His elder born, and lov'd beyond the rest,
And, far o'er all, in sense, skill, beauty, blest.
Hence, worthy of the bride, a bridegroom found,
A chief, o'er all in spacious Troy renown'd.
Him, Crete's brave monarch, by the sea-god's aid
Untimely hurl'd to Hades' gloomy shade.
With fetter'd feet, with eyes depriv'd of sight,
To fly unable, impotent to fight,
Like a stone pillar, or amid a wood
A tow'ring tree, the chieftain stilly stood.
The Cretan spear, whose unresisted stroke
Transfixt his breast, and brazen corselet broke,
Rang, jarring, as he fell beneath the dart,
Whose deep-fix'd point was centre'd in his heart,
And in each death-pang's palpitating strife,
Shook the long shaft, that throb'd with quivering life,
Till its last pulse had ceas'd: then, wild with joy,
The king loud vaunted o'er the host of Troy:

" What deems Deiphobus? why boast again?
" Lo! for one Greek three Trojan warriors slain.
" But—if thou wilt, rash fool! advance, and prove
" What thou avail'st 'gainst me, the son of Jove.

" From Jove great Minos came, the Cretan lord,
" From Minos sprung Deucalion, Crete-ador'd:
" His son I am, I, whose wide-sceptred sway,
" Crete, and her many-peopled towns obey:
" Arm'd by their pow'r, I sail'd to Phrygia's coast,
" I, death to thee, thy sire, and Ilion's host."

He spake: in doubt the Trojan warrior staid,
Back to retreat, and seek another's aid,
Or there, alone, insensible to fear,
Confront the Cretan boaster, spear 'gainst spear.
He sought another chief, and found, afar,
Æneas lingering in the rear of war,
Enrag'd, that Priam had not duely paid
High honour to his deeds, and pow'rful aid.

" Leader of Troy! (him thus the chief addrest,)
" Now be your known pre-eminence confest.
" If ere you felt the touch of kindred love,
" Now let Alcathous your compassion move,
" And to thy sister's honour'd lord repay,
" His hearth that rear'd thee in thy infant day.
" Haste! save from spoil his corse; on Phrygia's plain,
" He bleeds, by Crete's fierce king untimely slain."

The word Æneas rous'd: the chief, in rage,
Rush'd resolute the monarch to engage.
But not with childish dread the king withdrew,
As onward in his rage the Trojan flew,
But firmly stood. As on his rocky bed
A boar, mid deserts wild and mountains bred,
Hears the near hunters' shout, awaits th' attack,
And bristles into war his rattling back,
Whets his sharp tusks, with fiery eyeball glares,
And hounds and huntsmen to the conflict dares,—
Thus stood the monarch, yet, not unappall'd,
On brave Ascalaphus, Deipyrus call'd,
On fierce Meriones, Aphareus' might,
And young Antilochus, a god in fight:
" Advance, my dauntless friends, my summons hear,
" Leave me not lone with this unaided spear.
" I view—nor feign to hide my just dismay,
" Æneas rushing on his murderous way.
" Not slack his hand to slay, and fresh the flow'r
" Of manhood gifts him with surpassing pow'r:
" Such as our courage, were our years the same,
" I now should give or gain immortal fame."

He spake—and all, one soul in every mind,
Stood near, and o'er their brows their shields inclin'd.

On Troy Æneas call'd: her chiefs of fame,
Deiphobus, Agenor, Paris came:
On throng'd their hosts: as sheep to sheep succeed,
When the ram leads them from the pastur'd mead,
And seeks the fresh springs, while the guardian swain
Exultant views them whitening all the plain:
Thus joy'd Æneas, as the chieftain view'd
Warriors on warriors that his step pursu'd.
Each host around Alcathous, hand to hand,
Clash'd their long spears, and bath'd in blood the land:
Their battered corslets rung, and harsh the sound,
As, breast to breast, they gave and felt the wound.
But two brave chiefs, surpassing all the rest,
Tower'd, and against each other fiercely prest.
Æneas and the Cretan king, enrag'd,
War and exterminating conflict wag'd.
Æneas hurl'd his lance, it whizz'd, it past,
Nor smote the king observant of its cast,
But—fix'd in earth, unconscious of a wound,
Stood where it fell, and, quivering, shook the ground.
Not thus Idomeneus: his forceful stroke
The corselet's hollow of Ænomaus broke,
And pierc'd his entrails: reft at once of breath,
Prone fell the chief, and clench'd the dust in death.
The king pluck'd forth his lance, but strove in vain
To win his burnish'd arms, and spoil the slain:

So dense the show'r of darts, so sadly fail'd
In time-worn limbs the pow'r that once prevail'd.
How now elude the spears, by others thrown,
How, as of yore in youth, regain his own?
Sole hope, front fix'd on front, his life to save,
Nor by vain speed attempt to fly the grave.
Now stern Deiphobus, by vengeance fir'd,
As step by step Crete's war-worn chief retir'd,
Against him hurl'd his lance; it vainly flew:
But brave Ascalaphus, Mars' offspring, slew,
His shoulder smote, and pierc'd with deadly wound:
Prone fell the chief, and grasp'd in death the ground.
Mars knew it not: amid the pow'rs above,
All, barr'd from battle by behest of Jove,
Where high Olympus the immortals shrouds,
He sat, o'er-canopy'd with golden clouds.
War rag'd below: where, fiercely hand to hand,
Strove round Ascalaphus each hostile band:
There, as Deiphobus swift pluckt away
The helmet where the corse before him lay,
Meriones, observing, onward sprung,
His vengeful javelin on the spoiler flung,
Pierc'd his right arm, and from his slacken'd hand
Struck the brass helm, that rung against the land—
Again the conqueror, like a vulture flew,
Pluck'd back the dart, and to his host withdrew:

While thee, Deiphobus! a brother's hand
Polites bore from forth the hostile band,
And led, where, station'd in the rear of war,
Stood his swift steeds, and guide, and shining car.
To Troy they drew him, faint and worn with pain,
And groaning as the life-blood bath'd the plain.
Fierce warr'd the rest, and loud the thunder rose
Of batter'd armour, and conflicting foes.
On rush'd Æneas, and, swift lanching, smote,
As the Greek towards him turn'd, Aphareus' throat:
With shield and helm o'erpower'd, down dropt his brow,
And his soul vanish'd mid the shades below.
Antilochus, as Thoon turn'd around,
Not unobservant, dealt the mortal wound,
And cut off all the vein, whose course ascends
Along the back, and to the neck extends:
Cut off the whole: thus, on earth's gory bed
Prone Thoon to his friends his arms outspread.
On sprung Antilochus, to spoil the slain,
On, the dense mass of Trojans rush'd amain,
Struck his broad buckler; but no hostile dart
Raz'd his soft flesh, or bruis'd a vital part,
So Neptune watch'd, and ever turn'd aside
War's iron storm, and man's vain rage defied.
But keen Antilochus, the press among,
Swift and more swift his spear reposeless swung,

Alike prepar'd, from far to hurl the dart,
Or in close combat pierce th' opposed heart.
'Gainst him thus pondering, Adamas advanc'd,
And on his buckler's boss his javelin lanc'd,
But Ocean's Lord, not reckless of his charge,
Blunted the spear-point as it pierc'd the targe,
And the shaft broke, half fell upon the field,
Half, as a fire-scorch'd stake, within the shield
Stood firmly fix'd: in terror at the view,
Back, death avoiding, Adamas withdrew.
Meriones pursu'd the flying foe,
And dealt the wound that laid the Trojan low,
The wound, that chiefly pangs man's wretched frame,
The wound between the navel and the shame.
There, deeply pierc'd, the chief, mid pangs of death,
Roll'd on the lance, with interrupted breath,
Roll'd, palpitating: as by forceful swains
Bound, and dragg'd down, a bull, sore panting, strains,
Thus panted Adamas, ere long to rest,
When the chief pluck'd the javelin from his breast.
Then Helenus, with Thracia's ponderous glaive
To bold Deipyrus the death-wound gave,
His temple struck, unhelmeted his brow,
And the casque roll'd along the dust below,
Roll'd at some Grecian's foot, who seiz'd the spoil,
While its lord bit in death the blood-bath'd soil.

Grief seiz'd on Menelaus, grief and rage
Bad him with Helenus fell battle wage;
Fierce vibrating his lance, Atrides flew,
And Helenus his bow elastic drew.
Thus, front to front, this glow'd to lanch the dart,
That wing the shaft to Menelaus' heart.
First, the wing'd arrow on the hauberk rung,
Then from the polish'd brass innocuous sprung.
From the broad van, athwart the spacious floor,
As light in air dark beans and vetches soar,
Swept here and there before the driving blast,
Or by th' unwearied winnower upward cast,
Thus, glancing from the breast-plate, far apart
From Menelaus flew the bitter dart.
But Menelaus thro' the hand that held
The polish'd bow his brazen lance impell'd;
The chief shrunk back, and mid the Trojan throng
Trail'd with loose languid hand the shaft along.
Agenor drew it forth, and softly bound,
With wreath of fine-spun wool, the bleeding wound:
Such as his servant brought, and gave the king,
Wool of the fine-spun fleece that forms the sling.
Then as harsh fate to death Pisander drew,
The unconscious chief against Atrides flew,
Ere long to bathe with blood the Phrygian sand,
And doom'd to fall, Atrides! by thy hand.

Now, front to front, his spear Atrides lanc'd,
In vain:—aside the innocuous weapon glanc'd:
Vain too Pisander's spear: the feeble blow
That struck the buckler, fail'd to wound his foe;
The breadth of shield forbad: the spear-shaft broke,
While the chief deem'd that conquest crown'd the stroke.
Atrides then his bright-starr'd falchion drew,
And, wild with fury, on Pisander flew,
While 'neath his shield the chief a war-axe caught,
With length of olive handle, smoothly wrought.
At once they struck: Pisander's cleaving blow
Smote from the helm the crest in dust below:
But full against his front, Atrides' blade
Above his nostrils death's dire entrance made:
The crush'd bones crack'd, and starting from the wound,
His eye-balls at his feet distain'd the ground.
He bow'd, he fell; and standing on his breast,
The Greek, despoiling, thus his vaunt exprest:

" Insatiate of stern war, thus back retreat,
" Thus, perjur'd Trojans, fly from Hellas' fleet:
" Fly dogs, accurst, by every crime debas'd,
" Hence by my wrongs eternally disgrac'd,
" Ye, whom, nor shame, nor righteous terrors move,
" No, nor the wrath of hospitable Jove:

" Jove, whose grasp'd thunder but awaits the hour
" To lanch its flame on Priam's prostrate tow'r.
" Ye, who fair Helen's kindness dar'd betray,
" And stole, unwrong'd, my bride and wealth away;
" And now would burn our fleet, and mid the fire
" View on its wreck the slaughter'd Greeks expire:
" But—ye, ere long, your rashness shall refrain,
" And vengeance chase you from the battle-plain.
" Thy wisdom, Jove! 'tis rumour'd, all exceeds;
" Thine then the guilt, thine these permitted deeds.
" If Troy's perfidious sons thy favour gain,
" Ne'er shall th' embolden'd race from guilt abstain,
" Ne'er cease from war, or curb the mad desire
" To quench in blood their unappeased ire.
" Continu'd pleasures cease the soul to move,
" Sleep's soothing languor, and the charms of love,
" The melting melody, the graceful choir,
" All that far more than war awake desire,
" Th' o'ersatiate spirit cloy; but Troy, alone
" Unsated, drinks the warrior's dying groan."

He spake: and spoil'd the dead, and bad his host
Bear the bright trophy to the tented coast:
Then, rush'd amid the van-ward: there the son
Of King Pylæmen, rash Harpalion,

Who with his sire in arms sought Phrygia's plain,
But doom'd no more to hail his realm again,
Hurl'd on the chief a lance, whose feeble blow
Smote the boss'd shield, but fail'd to wound his foe;
Then, death avoiding, as he back withdrew,
Cast, fearful of a wound, around his view,—
In vain: while yet he fled, keen Merion's dart
Thro' his right buttock pierc'd a vital part,
And, by the bladder, underneath the bone,
Pass'd on, and drank Harpalion's dying groan—
The chief sank gradual down, and doom'd to death,
Faint in his followers' arms breath'd out his breath,
And, bath'd in blood, dark-welling from the wound,
Lay like a worm extended on the ground.
The Paphlagonians bore him to his car,
And led to Ilion from the field of war;
And with them, weeping, went his childless sire,
Doom'd, unaveng'd, to see his son expire.—

But he, whose feasts had oft regal'd his train,
Sad Paris mourn'd his guest, Harpalion, slain,
And, fir'd with wrath, against th' insulting foe
Wing'd the keen arrow from his vengeful bow.
There was a chief, for wealth, for valour, fam'd,
Whose dome in Corinth tower'd, Euchenor nam'd,
Son of the Seer Polŷdes: not untaught
Of future fate, him there his navy brought.

Oft had his aged sire's prophetic breath
Warn'd him of woe to come, and told his death,
Beneath his roof, by dire disease, or slain
Far from his peaceful home on Phrygia's plain.
He came: so shunn'd the Achæans' harsh reproof,
And death's slow pangs, beneath his native roof:
Beneath the jaw and ear the arrowy wound
Freed his wing'd soul, and plung'd in night profound.

Like flames they fought, ere yet the rumour'd word
Had past from host to host, by Hector heard,
That on the left of battle many a slain
Beneath the Greeks had strown with death the plain,
That victory o'er them hung, while Neptune led,
Urg'd on their ranks, and thunder'd at their head.
But Hector still the foe before him swept,
Where his fierce inroad first the wall o'erleapt:
There Ajax drew his ships along the strand,
And bold Protesilaus rang'd his band.
Such chiefs, such steeds suffic'd, tho' there the wall
Less lofty, fail'd the Trojans to appall.
There the Bœotian, Locrian, Phthian birth,
And Ion's race, whose vesture swept the earth,
Strove, but in vain, to stem fierce Hector's force,
That, flame-like, to the fleet urg'd on his course.

The chosen there of Athens, at whose head
Menestheus, Peteus' son, the van-ward led:
Brave Phidas there, there Stichius, Bias join'd:
Amphion there th' Epean ranks combin'd,
Meges, and Dracius; and with Phthia's brood,
Confederate chiefs, Podarces, Medon stood.
Medon, divine Oileus' base-born son,
Brother in blood to Ajax Telamon.
Yet he, whose hapless hand had swept from life
The much lov'd brother of Oileus wife,
His step-dame's vengeance fled, and, forc'd to roam,
Had found in Phylace a distant home.
With him Ephiclus' son in battle join'd
Led the brave Phthians, rank with rank combin'd,
Rang'd nigh Bæotia's force, the foe withstood,
And for their fleet resolv'd to shed their blood.
But Ajax, swift of foot, th' Oilean son
Stirr'd not a step from Ajax Telamon:
But, as two sable bullocks, side by side,
Draw the deep plough-share, and the glebe divide,
When round their rooted horns profusely shed
Large struggling sweat-drops bathe their fuming head,
While the same yoke combines their equal strength,
Furrowing the fallow to its utmost length:
Not otherwise, th' Ajaces, side by side,
Mov'd step by step, and Troy's arm'd force defied.

Yet—where great Telamon the battle led,
A numerous host, to death and danger bred,
Went, and in turn upbore his ponderous shield,
When worn with war he rested on the field.
Not thus the Locrian host their chief sustain'd,
They drew not near, in war's close charge untrain'd,
O'er their unhelmed brow no horse-hair play'd,
Lance, nor orb'd buckler, gave their warriors aid,
But the far whirling of the twisted sling,
And fleetness of the arrow's feathery wing:
Arm'd but with these, they bent to Troy their way,
Broke their close phalanx, and war's rang'd array.
And as the Ajaces on before them prest,
And rush'd on Hector with confronting breast,
They, from behind, unseen, their weapons flung,
And Ilion trembled as the tempest rung.
Then had in Troy the Trojans sought retreat,
And fled inglorious from the threaten'd fleet,
Had not Polydamas their chief addrest,
And thus unloos'd the burden of his breast:

" Hector! thy mind reluctantly receives
" The warning counsel that another gives.
" What—if Jove grant that thou in war excell,
" Must then with thee surpassing wisdom dwell?

" Thou can'st not all combine. Impartial heav'n
" To some pre-eminence in war has giv'n:
" Some lighter lead the dance: to some belong
" The lyre's soft touch, and melody of song;
" Great Jove has planted in another's mind
" The seeds of wisdom that improve mankind:
" Wills, that on him a nation's weal depend,
" And conscious merit on his path attend.
" Thence, will I freely speak—war's quenchless ire
" Now round us circles a consuming fire.
" Where they who forc'd the wall, that dauntless host?
" Already some in arms have left the coast:
" Some, mid the ships, diversely, here and there,
" With countless foes unequal combat dare.
" Recede awhile: the chiefs to council call,
" And by their gather'd wisdom govern all,
" Whether to charge the fleet, if gracious heav'n
" To Troy's brave sons have fame and victory giv'n,
" Or back retreat, unhurt, lest Greece repay
" The shame and slaughter of the former day,
" And arm the man who now, in stern repose,
" Waits but to rush resistless on his foes."

He spake: and Troy's great leader, mail'd for war,
Leapt on the ground, and left his battle car,

And thus replied: "Thou here the chiefs detain,
"I will confront yon host, and Greece restrain,
"Then backward speed, when Troy my voice has heard,
"And war rekindling flames at Hector's word."

Then, like a snow-capt mount, with radiant crest,
Mid Troy and her allies, fierce-shouting, prest,
While the arm'd chiefs, as Hector gave command,
Throng'd round Polydamas, and fix'd their stand.
But Hector, rushing mid the van-ward, sought
Where yet Deiphobus unwearied fought,
Where Adamas, where Helenus engag'd,
And brave Hyrtacides fierce battle wag'd.
He found the chiefs, but none without a wound,
And some expiring, stretch'd along the ground,
Some at the navy's stern, along the bay,
Beneath the Argive conquerors breathless lay:
Some, pierc'd by arrows, on the rampart bled,
Some, in close combat, swell'd the countless dead.
Yet Hector found, where most the battle rag'd,
Fair Helen's lord upon the left engag'd:
Fiercely he fought, and bravely urg'd the rest,
When Hector thus indignantly addrest:

"Fair, wanton, wily, ill-starr'd boy, declare,
"Where now Deiphobus, brave Asius, where?

" Where Adamas, Othroneus' vengeful spear,
" And the dread strength of Ilion's royal seer?
" All Troy prone rushes from her base o'erthrown:
" Haste where death waits thee, there thy guilt atone."

" Why"—Paris said—" injurious to my fame,
" Reproach thy brother—why the blameless blame?
" Not now—if once—I shun the battle's roar:
" She who gave birth to Hector, Paris bore.
" E'en from that hour thou bad'st assail the fleet,
" Here have we ceaseless warr'd, nor deign'd retreat.
" But—of those chiefs thou seek'st, all nobly slain
" Lie in their glory on the battle plain,
" All, save Deiphobus, and Ilion's seer,
" Yet now they war not, gor'd by Hellas' spear.
" Lead where thy force thy warrior heart incline,
" There Paris and his host shall rival thine.
" Urge all our strength, if strength can yet avail,
" But forc'd beyond their pow'r, the bravest fail."

Such words assuag'd him, on the heroes sped,
Where the press thicken'd, and the slaughter spread.
Where brave Polydamas and Phalces rag'd,
Orthræus and Cebriones engag'd,
Where Polyphætes, Palmys, Greece defied,
And the fierce brothers battled side by side,

Ascanius, Morys, of Hippotion born,
Who from Ascania's glebe, but yester morn,
Came, rendering back to Troy her aid of yore,
Came, by stern Jove impell'd, to Phrygia's shore.
The chiefs, fierce rushing to the conflict, past
Swift as the fury of the whirlwind blast,
That, charg'd with thunder and the wrath of Jove,
Bursts from the broken firmament above,
Wide wastes the earth, and with immingling sweep
Lifts up the waters of the mighty deep,
And, mid the tempest, waves propelling waves,
Rides on their ridgy crests, and widely raves:
Thus, rank on rank, bright mail'd in war array,
Arm'd Troy pursu'd their chiefs' advancing way.
Like blood-bath'd Mars mid battle's fiery storm,
Before the van-ward stalk'd th' Hectorean form.
The brazen burden of his taurine shield
Flash'd the wide splendour that illum'd the field:
High wav'd the casque, that helmeted his head,
And round his temples radiant terror spread.
Behind his targe, the chief, in blaze of light,
Rush'd here and there to force their ranks to flight:
But vain his radiant helm, his blazing shield:
The warrior heart of Greece disdain'd to yield:
And Ajax, striding on, by rage enflam'd,
Provok'd the combat, and aloud exclaim'd:

" Advance—shall dread of thee our phalanx quell?
" We too, war-skill'd, such boasters back repell.
" 'Twas not thy arm, 'twas Jove's malignant ire,
" That forc'd, ere-while, th' astounded Greek retire.
" Hence thy mad hope to fire our ships—advance—
" Death now before thee lifts the avenging lance.
" Ere flames an Argive bark, Troy's sacred wall,
" And Priam's plunder'd tow'rs shall prostrate fall.
" The time is come, when Hector, as he flies,
" Shall weary every god in yonder skies,
" And pray that, fleeter than the falcon's wing,
" His steeds may back to Troy Troy's champion bring."

While yet he spoke, o'er Hector on the right,
The bird of Jove wing'd his auspicious flight:
And all his host, embolden'd at the sign,
Gaz'd up, and shouting, hail'd the will divine.

" Dull, bulky babbler"—Hector then replied—
" Such boastful threats but mock and mar thy pride,
" So were I born of Ægis-bearing Jove,
" By Juno gender'd in the realms above:
" So were I honour'd in heaven's high abode,
" As mail'd Minerva, and the archer god,
" As now, this day, shall death's o'ershadowing wing
" O'er all the Argive host destruction fling:

" And here this lance, if yet thou dare withstand
" Its barb, shall pierce thee, wing'd by Hector's hand,
" And thy flesh'd bulk shall satiate on our shore
" Dogs, and fierce birds that bathe their beak in gore."

He spake: and onward rush'd, with maddening rage,
On rush'd his host fierce shouting to engage:
Nor less resolv'd, Troy's bravest chiefs before,
Stood Hellas' ranks, immingling roar with roar:
The outcry of each army rang afar,
Smote heav'n's high vault, and rent the air with war.

THE FOURTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses rebukes Agamemnon exhorting the chiefs to take refuge in their ships.—Neptune reanimates the Greeks.—Juno seduces Jove.—The battle continued with mutual slaughter.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XIV.

Bent o'er the bowl, rous'd Nestor heard afar
The shout and clangour of conflicting war,
And thus exclaim'd: "Divine Machaon! hear,
"What bodes this outcry that assails my ear?
"Hark! from our combatants the battle roar
"Bursts from the fleet far louder than of yore.
"Thou in the tent at peaceful rest recline,
"And gather up thy strength refresh'd with wine,
"While bright-hair'd Hecamede warms the wave,
"And serves the bath thy limbs from blood to lave:
"I onward haste, where yon commanding height
"Views the far champain, and o'erlooks the fight."

He spake: and grasp'd his son's refulgent shield,
Who with his sire's that day had fac'd the field:
Then seiz'd his keen-edg'd spear, and lonely went
From the still shelter of his peaceful tent.

What scene of horror open'd on his sight?
Troy in pursuit, and Hellas' host on flight,
A wreck their wall—as when the glassy deep,
Smooth, without wave, in silence seems to sleep,
And, motionless, to neither side inclin'd,
Waits, prescient of the storm, the driving wind,
Thus, Nestor, long in poise of doubtful thought,
Stood, by distracting passions deeply wrought,
Or Hellas' ranks to join, or wend his way,
Where in his tent the son of Atreus lay.
There Nestor past, while slaughter fill'd the field,
And, falchion clash'd on falchion, shield on shield.

Now each brave leader, whose enfeebling wound
Had claim'd repose, while battle rag'd around,
Ulysses, Diomed, and Grecia's chief,
Met Nestor speeding to their prompt relief.
They came from forth their ships, that, drawn on shore,
Stood rang'd at distance from the battle roar.
The foremost ranks upon the plain repos'd,
Where a strong wall their guarded sterns enclos'd.
But not its breadth, tho' broad that spacious coast,
Held the vast numbers of their naval host:
Rank beyond rank thro' all the o'ercrowded bay,
Far as the headlands spread, the gallies lay.

Prompt on their spears, the chiefs came forth to view
The war, whose tumult fierce and fiercer grew;
Deep was their grief, but deeper on each breast,
At Nestor's sight, unwonted misery prest.

" Nestor"—Atrides spake—" why, Grecia's pride?
" Why from the combat turns thy step aside?
" I dread lest Hector now achieve his boast,
" His daring threat mid Troy's exultant host,
" That ne'er his voice should Ilion hail again
" Till, mid our fleet on fire, we swell the slain;
" Now—all consummated—on me, my brow
" The vengeance of a nation shall o'erflow,
" All, like Achilles, lanch on me their ire,
" Nor ward our fleet from Hector's arm of fire."

" Yes"—Nestor answer'd—" 'tis as Nestor spoke—
" Jove can no more our destiny revoke—
" The wall, where Hellas fix'd her anchor'd trust,
" Our host's, our fleet's proud bulwark, prone in dust.
" Now in the rage of her resistless course
" Troy on our navy bursts with all her force,
" Nor canst thou, gazing on the Greeks, discern
" Which way their troubled ranks confus'dly turn,
" So foes immix with foes, while death around
" Wide spreads, and war's fell shouts to heav'n resound.

" Yet—now consult, if counsel may avail;—
" To war I urge you not—how, wounded, there prevail?"

" Since at our fleet they war"—Atrides said—
" Nor wall, nor fosse their inroad has delay'd,
" Where long we toil'd, and in their guard enclos'd
" Our navy station'd, and our host repos'd,
" 'Tis Jove's stern purport that the Argive host
" Here fall inglorious on a foreign coast.
" I knew that once beneath Saturnius' aid
" Exultant victory beam'd from Hellas' blade,
" Now too I know, 'tis Jove our arm enchains,
" And Troy's rais'd glory high as heav'n sustains.
" Yet—hear my voice: draw down, and launch again
" The ships, whose ranks close range along the main,
" There, on their strength firm-anchor'd, Troy withstand,
" Till night o'er heav'n and earth her veil expand:
" Then, if Troy yield to night, beneath her veil
" Launch all the fleet, nor leave on land a sail.
" Better to fly the shade of night beneath,
" Than captur'd by the foe in bondage breathe."

Ulysses sternly ey'd him, and exclaim'd:
" Why has thy word thyself and Hellas sham'd?
" Thou should'st have led to Troy a timorous band,
" Not leagu'd such chiefs as now before thee stand.

" From youth to age, Jove bad us greatly dare,
" All battles brave, and die the death of war.
" Thou counsel'st flight:—flight from th' uncaptur'd wall,
" Whose tow'rs have shouted o'er our warriors' fall.
" Silence: lest haply that disgraceful word
" Be by some scornful Greek at distance heard :
" That word, which none who e'er felt dread of shame,
" Or sense of honour, dar'd aloud proclaim,
" No scepter'd chieftain, whose acknowledg'd sway
" Such countless hosts, as thou command'st, obey.
" Curst be the counsel that would fain persuade,
" When battle burns, and foes the camp invade,
" To draw our navy down, so yield to Troy,
" Her vows to consummate, and Greece destroy.
" Destruction must o'erwhelm us: ne'er again
" Greece fronts the foe, our navy mid the main:
" There, all would backward gaze, there hide their fear,
" If Greece her monarch's baleful counsel hear."

Atrides answer'd—" Each reproachful word,
" Which wounds my inmost soul, thy king has heard—
" Yet—not if Greece object, not my command
" To launch our navy, and desert the land.
" But now, who, old or young, can weal impart,
" Him his king honours with no thankless heart."

" That man"—Tydides cried—" behold him near,
" So ye incline, and deign a younger hear—
" I, son of Tydeus, glory in my birth:
" Tho' o'er him Thebes has heap'd her sacred earth.
" In rocky Calydon and Pleuron bred,
" Three sons illustrious sprung from Portheus' bed,
" Agrius, and Melas, Oeneus third and last
" My sire's fam'd sire, whose glory all surpast.
" There Oeneus dwelt: my sire to Argos stray'd,
" So Jove and all the gods his purpose sway'd:
" There, with Adrastus' beauteous daughter blest,
" The chief in peace his stately dome possest:
" His fields with harvests, groves with fruitage crown'd,
" And flocks innumerous rang'd his meads around.
" No arm like his could aim the death-fraught spear:
" I speak the word of truth:—hear, warriors! hear!
" None may my birth, as weak and worthless born,
" None the free word of truth I utter, scorn.
" By stern necessity's strong fetter bound,
" Join we the field, tho' weak with many a wound,
" There, at due distance from the darts, remain,
" Lest, wound on wound, we fall, and swell the slain:
" So shall our glowing words the ranks excite,
" And urge to war the host who fly the fight."

All joyful heard, and proudly at their head
The son of Atreus the bold warriors led.

Then, on keen watch, like one in years grown grey,
The Lord of Ocean met them on their way,
Clasp'd Agamemnon's hand, and thus addrest:
" Now, savage joy dilates Achilles' breast:
" Th' infatuate chief now views with stern delight
" Our battle thinn'd by death, and turn'd to flight.
" So fall that maniac!—deep disgrace and scorn
" O'erwhelm the baleful race from Peleus born!
" Yet not alike all gods, allied with Jove,
" Exhaust on thee their vengeance from above:
" Thou yet shalt view yon host retreat again,
" And trace their flight in dust along the plain."

He spoke: and shouted as he crost the field:
Such the dire shout ten thousand warriors yield,
When host 'gainst host confronted, send afar
The fierce defiance, preluding the war.
Such the earth-shaker's voice that Hellas fir'd,
Steel'd every heart, and war's stern lust inspir'd.

Rous'd at the shout, Heaven's Queen, who sate alone,
Mid high Olympus, on her golden throne,
Look'd down, and where to battle Neptune trod,
Rejoic'd to see a brother in the god.
Then, glancing round, with hateful eye descried
The Thunderer seated on the brow of Ide:

Long mus'd how best a specious wile to weave
To lure his senses and the god deceive—
How!—in gay pomp and graceful robes array'd,
The queen will greet her lord, on Ida laid,
By winning beauty charm, and softly move
His glowing heart, and reunite in love:
Then each charm'd sense subdu'd, profoundly steep
His languid eyelids in oblivious sleep.
Thus fix'd, she left the mount, and lonely sought
The palace of her rest, by Vulcan wrought,
Where on its massive posts the gates repose,
No god can ope, nor key save her's unclose.
There Juno entering, in her dome immur'd,
The polish'd portal with that key secur'd:
Then, with divine ambrosia, o'er and o'er
Lav'd her fair limbs, and perfum'd every pore,
And smooth'd with oil, that from the dome of Jove
Diffus'd o'er earth the fragrance breath'd above—
Dew'd with its liquid sweets, the goddess glow'd,
And bath'd the tresses that profusely flow'd
Round her fair front, and artfully enwreath'd
The golden braids that richest odours breath'd.
Then rob'd her charms, and round her snowy breast
Gather'd, with golden clasps, th' ambrosial vest,
Where, exquisitely wrought with changeful art,
The wonders of a Pallas grac'd each part.

Next, girt her bosom with th' embroider'd zone,
Whence, in bright wave, an hundred tassels shone:
Her earrings clasp'd, that, round her, lustre ray'd,
As gemm'd with light their triple pendants play'd:
Next, o'er her shaded charms, half hid from sight,
Past a new veil, that beam'd like solar light,
On her fair feet resplendent sandals lac'd,
And with new charms each native beauty grac'd.
Then forth the goddess stept, and, drawn apart,
Thus Aphrodite woo'd with winning art:

" Deign, lovely Venus! with my pray'r comply,
" Nor, when I warmly sue, my suit deny;—
" Refuse me not, tho' Greece confess my aid,
" While by thy pow'r their foes the fleet invade."

" Deign"—Venus spake—" Great Queen, reveal thy will:
" My pow'r, if pow'rful, shall thy wish fulfil."

Then Juno, weaving guileful treachery, said—
" Give me thy charms, whose pow'r can all persuade,
" Can bend at will th' omnipotence of Jove,
" And chain alike both gods and men in love—
" I haste to visit at the bounds of earth
" Oceanus, the god who gave us birth,

" And Tethys, our great mother, in whose dome
" I found, by Rhea led, a nurturing home,
" When Jove, usurping the Olympian reign,
" Hurl'd Saturn underneath the earth and main.
" Long have the gods from nuptial bliss abstain'd,
" Long in their hearts dissevering anger reign'd.
" Might yet my words that bitter hate assuage,
" And link in love souls still estrang'd by rage,
" Bring back lost bliss, and heart to heart restore,
" How would those grateful gods my pow'r adore!"

" Ill it beseems"—the Queen of Love replied,
" That thou should'st sue, and hear thy suit denied—
" When Juno deigns to ask, who dares reprove
" The empress of high heav'n, and spouse of Jove."

Then from her breast unclasp'd th' embroider'd zone,
Where each embellishment divinely shone:
There dwell th' allurements, all that love inspire,
There soft seduction, there intense desire,
There witchery of words, whose flatteries weave
Wiles that the wisdom of the wise deceive.

Then, Venus, laid on Juno's snowy hand
With all its charms the fascinating band:

" This on thy bosom place, in this confide,
" And ne'er shalt thou return, thy wish denied."

She spake: and Juno smil'd, and smiling laid
On her fair breast the zone's embroider'd braid.
Glad Venus sought high heav'n: but, prompt on flight,
Impatient Juno, from th' Olympian height,
Now swept Pieria, now Emathia o'er,
The Thracian mountains, and their ice-ribb'd shore,
Nor ever deign'd her length of flight to rest,
Nor her light foot-print on the earth imprest,
Till, o'er the deep, from Atho, in descent
To Lemnos, Thoas' isle, the goddess went,
There meeting Sleep, twin-brother born with death,
Hung on his hand, and sooth'd with flattering breath.

" Tamer of gods and men! Sleep! kindly hear!
" And deign—if e'er thou deign'dst—incline thine ear.
" Yield to my pray'r: so ne'er from Juno's heart
" Ne'er shall the glow of gratitude depart.
" Seal in oblivious sleep the lids of Jove,
" Soon as again we meet in nuptial love.
" And take my gifts, most beauteous to behold,
" By Vulcan grac'd, a throne and stool of gold,
" Where thy fair feet may rest in soft repose,
" While lingering banquets indolently close."

" Great Goddess"—Sleep replied—" rever'd above,
" Daughter of Saturn, and thron'd wife of Jove,
" Bid me o'er other eye-lids gently steal,
" Far other Gods, than Jove, in slumber seal.
" Far rather bid me still the stormy deep,
" And lay our sire, Oceanus, to sleep;
" But ne'er, unbidden by Jove's high behest,
" I dare approach, and close his eye in rest.
" Once, at thy suit, when sail'd, that fatal day,
" From plunder'd Troy th' Herculean strength away,
" I, softly flowing round, his eye-lid clos'd,
" While thou wert weaving wiles, as Jove repos'd:
" Thine was the storm that cross'd Alcides' way,
" And forc'd him friendless on the Coan bay.
" Jove woke, and with dark rage intensely fraught,
" Me, tempesting all heav'n, me chiefly sought,
" And—but for Night, who tames both man and god,—
" Had hurl'd me seaward from his bright abode.
" 'Twas Night's soft influence, by my prayer implor'd,
" That sooth'd the anger of th' Olympian lord:
" And Jove restrain'd his rage, lest deeds unblest
" Should Night offend, and violate her rest.
" Must I again such outrage dare?" " No more,"
The goddess answer'd, " dwell on deeds of yore.
" Deem'st thou that Troy can touch the heart of Jove,
" Like wrong'd Alcides, offspring of his love?

" Yield: and Pasithea, the young Grace divine,
" So long belov'd by thee, shall now be thine."

She spake: exultant Somnus answer gave:
" Swear thou by Styx, th' inviolable wave,
" Here to earth's fruitful bed thy arm expand,
" And on the marble main there lay thy hand,
" Invoking all the deities below,
" All that round Saturn dwell, to test thy vow,
" That the young Grace, Pasithea the divine,
" So long belov'd of me, shall now be mine."

He spake, and Juno, at his urg'd request,
To all th' infernal gods her oath address'd;
All who beneath the abyss of Tartarus dwell,
Titanian pow'rs, the giant brood of Hell.
Her oath thus solemnis'd, they wing'd their way
From Imbrus' turrets and the Lemnian bay,
And, rob'd with darkness, swept where cloud-capt Ide
From her pure founts perpetual streams supplied:
Then, from the deep withdrawn, to Lectos past,
And, foremost, there on earth their shadow cast.
The wood's high tops, beneath each present god,
Wav'd, as th' o'erpassing foot above them trod.

There, from his course alighting, Somnus staid,
Ere Jove's observant eye the god survey'd,
And, resting on the loftiest pine his flight,
Couch'd mid its branches in o'ershadowing night,
Like a shrill bird, Cymindis call'd below,
But Chalcis by the gods on Ida's brow.—

Then Juno, soaring in her upward flight,
Reach'd Gargarus' highest brow on Ida's height:
The Thunderer saw her, and resistless love,
As soon as seen, inflam'd the heart of Jove:
Such, as when first in all their glowing charms,
Clasp'd in stolen joy, they blest each other's arms.
Jove rose at her approach, and thus addrest:
" Say, why Olympus leave for Ida's crest ?
" Not here thy steeds their sovereign duly wait,
" Nor Juno's chariot marks her heavenly state."

She guileful answer'd: " At the bounds of earth
" I seek the god, the author of our birth,
" And Tethys, our great mother, in whose dome
" I found, by Rhea brought, a nurturing home:
" So may my words their bitterness assuage,
" And link in love hearts long estrang'd by rage.
" At Ida's fount-fed roots the coursers stand,
" That wing my chariot o'er the sea and land.

" Now thy consent to gain, for that alone
" I left for Ida's crest th' Olympian throne,
" Lest thou shouldst rage, if e'er hereafter heard,
" I sought the gods unsanctioned by thy word."

" There"—Jove replied—" speed there another day,
" Now glide these hours in bridal bliss away:
" For never goddess could such passion move,
" Nor earthly fair so bathe each sense in love,
" No, not Ixion's consort, from whose birth
" Arose Perithous, wise o'er all on earth;
" Not Danae, finely limb'd, from whose embrace
" Came Perseus, chief of the heroic race;
" Nor fair Europa's charms, whence, heirs of fame,
" Just Rhadamanthus and firm Minos came;
" No, nor Alcmena, by whose beauty won,
" Thebes hail'd me father of the Herculean son;
" Nor Semele, from whom great Bacchus sprung,
" The joy of earth, the gay, the fair, the young;
" Nor Ceres, glorying in her golden hair;
" No, nor Latona, fairest of the fair;
" No, nor thyself, as now intense desire
" Thrills thro' each vein, and fills my heart with fire."

The goddess guileful said, " What ill-weigh'd word
" Has Juno from thy lip, Saturnius, heard?

" If 'tis thy will, by mutual love possest,
" Heart beat on heart,—not here, on Ida's crest,
" Some god might view us, and to all disclose,
" To every god the scene of our repose:
" How then, uprising, could I home return,
" Nor feel my brow with shame intensely burn?
" But if resistless glow love's hallow'd fire,
" Now to the palace of thy rest retire,
" Which, fram'd by Vulcan, massive gates enclose,
" There, in thy consort's arms, unblam'd, repose."

" Ne'er shall love's blissful spot"—Saturnius cried,
" Be by a mortal seen, or god descried,
" I pour the cloud, that now divinely roll'd,
" Shall canopy our couch with woven gold:
" A cloud impervious to the subtlest sight,
" The beam that issues from the orb of light."

He spake, and clasp'd his bride, the joyous earth
Burst into bloom of odoriferous birth;
There the blue hyacinth, gold crocus rose,
And the moist lotus op'd its cup of snows.
These, underneath them, their soft broidery spread,
Swell'd gently up and form'd their fragrant bed:
And as the gods there lay dissolv'd in love,
Resplendent dew-drops gemm'd their gold alcove.

While, lull'd in Juno's arms, with sleep o'erpower'd,
Jove lay on Gargarus' fragrant brow embower'd,
Forth Somnus flew, the Grecian navy sought,
And the swift word that fir'd the sea-god brought:

" Speed, while yet time, th' o'erwearied Grecians aid,
" Lead them to glory, in thy strength array'd.
" My pow'r has charm'd to sleep the lids of Jove,
" And Juno seal'd them by deceitful love."

He spake: and spread his wings for further flight,
O'er other realms to pour the balm of night,
While Neptune, flaming with redoubled rage,
Burst on the van, and urg'd them to engage.

" Greeks! shall once more yon Hector glory gain,
" And vaunt our fleet in flames, our warriors slain?
" Whence his vain boast? that still in sullen rage,
" Pelides lowers, nor deigns the battle wage?
" Why wait that chief? let Hellas, undismay'd,
" Trust to her strength, and each the other aid.
" My word obey; charg'd with war's broadest shield,
" Bear up the burden, and redeem the field,
" Brace on your front your brightest helms, and poise
" The spear whose length far off the foe destroys.

" Come, I will lead you on, to victory lead,
" Where from your onset Hector shall recede,
" Now the light targe to feebler hands resign,
" Move on, an iron mass in serried line."

He spake: the warriors listen'd, and obey'd:
Mid them the wounded kings the host array'd,
Ulysses, Agamemnon, Tydeus' heir,
Bade, fitly arm'd, each warrior boldly dare;
To the faint heart and hand the target gave,
And with the buckler's burden charg'd the brave.
They march'd, by Neptune led, whose arm of strength,
Brandish'd aloft a glaive's enormous length,
That flash'd fierce lightning where the sea-god past,
And fear and flight around him widely cast.

Now Priam's dauntless son his host array'd,
While dark-hair'd Neptune gave his Hellas aid,
And with unwonted fury battle rag'd,
When front to front the god and man engag'd.
The sea-surge swept the camp, and rock'd the shore,
Rebellowing back the battle's rush and roar.
Less loud the breakers of the billowy deep,
Lash'd by the raging north's tempestuous sweep,
Less loud the flames that on the mountain's brow,
From woods wide-blazing, light the world below,

Less loud the crash when from the whirlwind's stroke,
Fall in the howling forest, oak on oak,
Than burst the clangour, host to host oppos'd,
When Greece and Troy in mail'd encounter clos'd.

Illustrious Hector first in fierce advance,
Direct on Ajax hurl'd his ponderous lance,
And smote him where the belt that held his blade,
The belt that brac'd his battle-shield o'erlaid:
The dart there stay'd—then, wild with wrath and woe,
The chief, indignant at the fruitless blow,
Stept back, and mid Troy's sheltering ranks withdrew,
Lest instant death his vain attempt pursue.
But Ajax, where a rock's huge fragment lay,
Heav'd up from earth the stone that crost his way,
And whirling like a wheel the mass around
That once had moor'd a gally on that ground,
Hurl'd it o'er Hector's orbed shield, and smote
The hero's breast, and struck his tender throat.
As when, beneath the Thunderer's flam'd-wing'd stroke,
Falls in its branching pride th' uprooted oak,
When prone on earth its shatter'd glory lies,
And sulphurous vapours from its wreck arise:
None, at that sight, no wanderer passing near,
Can view the wrath of Jove without a fear:

Thus Hector fell, and as he smote the field,
Fell his grasp'd spear, his lance, and rattling shield,
And, wildly shouting, to his armour's bray,
Greece rush'd to drag him from the press away,
Rush'd mid the javelins' storm: but, none had pow'r,
None, far or near, to speed his fated hour:
For Ilion's bravest chiefs repell'd the wound,
And clos'd their strength the lord of war around.
There brave Polydamas, Agenor there,
Sarpedon, Glaucus, and Anchises' heir.
Nor other warriors fail'd, but more and more
Rush'd on, and clos'd their shields the chief before.
They bore him from the battle where his car
And coursers stood behind the ranks of war,
Then back to Ilion drove, where cross their way
The ford of swiftly eddying Xanthus lay,
There, on its margin laid th' expiring chief,
Bath'd his cold brow, and gave awhile relief.
From the fresh wave, tho' life new breath resum'd,
And day once more his opening lid relum'd,
Yet, as he knelt on earth, the gurgling blood
Gush'd from his throat, and stain'd the crystal flood,
While in deep swoon, exhausted on the ground,
The warrior sank beneath the Ajacean wound.

The Greeks, what time the chieftain turn'd away,
Rush'd with redoubled rage to close the fray,

But first the swift Oilean Ajax flew,
And, springing forward, youthful Satnius slew,
Whom the enamour'd nymph to Enops bore,
As the swain fed his herds on Satnios shore;
But Oiliades advancing near,
Deep buried in his flank his deadly spear;
Supine young Satnius fell, and round his corse,
The Greeks and Trojans clash'd with madd'ning force.
O'er him Panthoides revengeful stood,
And hurl'd his spear that drank Prothenor's blood:
The ponderous javelin through his shoulder past,
And prone on earth the hapless warrior cast,
And while his grasp convulsive tore the ground,
Thus the loud vaunter gloried o'er the wound:
" No, not in vain I deem'd that weapon flew,
" Which from this vigorous arm the warrior slew.
" No doubt some Grecian leaning on its aid
" Will find his way to hell's profoundest shade."

He spake, the insult grieved the Argive host,
But Ajax' arm alone repaid the boast;
Near him the corse had fallen; th' avenger cast
His death lance, as the victor onward past;
But keen Panthoides its flight descried,
And, backward springing, turn'd from death aside.

But brave Archilochus, so heaven ordained,
The force and fury of that dart sustained.
The lance each tendon severed, and disjoined
The juncture that the head and neck combined:
He sank; his nostrils and his helmed brow,
Ere the knee bow'd, prone fell beneath the blow;
There, as he lifeless lay, with taunting sound,
Thus Ajax loudly gloried o'er the wound:

" Reflect Polydamas, and truly say
" Will not thy death Prothenor's death repay?
" Not worthless thou, nor thine: in thee I trace
" A son or brother of Antenor's race."
He, conscious spake. Deep grief the Trojans stung,
At the loud boasting of the Ajacean tongue.
Then Acamas, who round his brother's corse
Stalk'd, and repell'd from spoil the hostile force,
Fierce Promachus, Bœotia's leader slew,
While from the press of war the dead he drew:
Then cried aloud, " Vile Argives, vaunting host,
" Insatiate threateners, tongues of idle boast,
" Not unto us alone the toil and woe,
" Ye, doom'd alike, shall death's deep anguish know.
" Lo! how in slumber seal'd this warrior lies,
" Not long, a brother unavenged dies.

" Thus let each Trojan boast with farewell breath,
" ' A brother watches to avenge my death.' "

The Grecians mourn'd, but chief of all their host
Peneleus' soul ill brook'd th' insulter's boast:
On rush'd the chief, but Acamas withdrew,
And the fell shaft Ilioneus slew,
The son of Phorbas, who, by Hermes blest,
Stores of vast wealth, and countless flocks possest.
Him his fair mother, erst by Hermes won,
Gave to the light of day her only son;
The spear, that clave his eye-ball, through the wound
Drove out the pupil, quivering on the ground,
And pierc'd his skull: then cow'ring on the plain,
The warrior sat, and spread his arms in vain;
While fierce Peneleus, with relentless blade,
Swift, as he smote his neck, the death-wound made,
On earth the head and nodding helmet flung,
While yet the weapon in the socket hung,
Then like a poppy, from the ensanguin'd soil,
The victor rais'd, and glory'd o'er the spoil:

" Speed, Trojan! speed, the woeful tale repeat,
" Ne'er shall his home Ilioneus greet,
" Ne'er shall his parents hail their son's return,
" But bend in anguish o'er his funeral urn.

" Say, ' Ne'er shall Promachus' fair wife retrace
" ' Her lord's lov'd form, and hang on his embrace,
" ' When Hellas' fleet, with Ilion's plunder'd store,
" ' Hails mid triumphant shouts his native shore.' "

Fear fell on all, on one sole aim intent—
To fly the foe, and instant death prevent.

Say, Muses! ye, on yon Olympian height,
Ye, whose rais'd harps immortal deeds recite:
What Greek first gain'd the spoils with blood imbued,
When Ocean's god Troy's flying host pursued?

First, Telamonian Ajax Hyrtius slew,
Who Mysia's dauntless host to battle drew.
Antilochus brave Phalces' corse despoil'd,
And Mermerus' limbs with gory dust defil'd.
Beneath Meriones Hyppotion bled,
And Morys perish'd with the mighty dead.
And Periphetes fell, by Teucer slain,
And Prothoon bath'd with blood the battle plain.
In Hyperenor's flank the forceful dart
Lanch'd by Atrides, pierc'd a mortal part,
His entrails tore, and, where they strow'd the ground,
The vital spirit issued through the wound,

Death veil'd his eyes; but chief the Oilean sped,
While, at each blow, a warrior 'neath him bled,
And when stern Jove Troy's flying host subdued,
None with such winged foot their flight pursued.

THE FIFTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Jupiter awaking, and beholding the rout of the Trojans, menaces Juno; sends Iris to bear his commands to Neptune to withdraw his aid from the Grecians.—Apollo, by the behest of Jove, armed with his Ægis, leads Hector and the Trojans to victory.—The flying Grecians pursued to their fleet, defended by Ajax.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XV.

Now when, amid the dying and the dead,
O'er the deep trench and stakes the Trojans fled,
And while yet lingering, desperate in their fear,
Staid where their chariots ranged along the rear,
Then from fair Juno's arms, where, guiled by Love,
On Ida's summit lay Saturnian Jove,
The god uprose, and on the plain below
View'd the Greeks chase their unresisting foe,
And the mail'd Sea-God, mid the Argive band,
And Hector lying on his native land,
Who, with each gasp of breath, pour'd forth his blood,
While mourning o'er their lord, his warriors stood:
Jove, pitying, view'd, and with fierce rage inflam'd,
On Juno sternly gazing, thus exclaim'd:

" Framer of ill! dissembler! thy deceit,
" Thy fraud made Hector and his host retreat.

" But thou, at thy success, shalt foremost grieve,
" And guilt's just chastisement from Jove receive.
" Hast thou forgot, when from th' Olympian seat,
" What time I hung two anvils at thy feet,
" And round thy hands a golden chain entwin'd,
" Thou swung'st in clouds that wav'd with every wind?
" When o'er thee mourn'd the gods, but mourn'd in vain,
" For none could loose th' indissoluble chain.
" Him, whom I seiz'd, from heaven's high threshold hurl'd,
" I cast, scarce breathing, down to yonder world.
" But not so much my soul with passion rag'd,
" When wrong'd Alcides all my cares engag'd,
" When lur'd by thee, stern Boreas' ceaseless blast
" O'er the wide deep his storm-toss'd vessel cast,
" While thou, artificer of ill, perforce
" Turn'dst, to throng'd Cos, the wanderer from his course.
" I freed him thence, and all his labours o'er,
" Led him victorious to his native shore.
" This in thy memory grave, so cease thy wiles,
" Nor practice on thy lord delusive smiles,
" Thus learn how vain the simulated love
" That drew thee from the gods to fawn on Jove."

Thus awfully severe the Thunderer spoke,
And Juno, shuddering, thus her silence broke:

" I call on earth beneath, on heaven above,
" On the dark flood of subterranean Jove,
" The Stygian lake, the inviolable test,
" Whose oath strikes terror in each heav'nly breast,
" Thy hallowed brow, our bridal couch of yore,
" Whose virgin sanctity I yet adore,
" That ne'er I sought the Sea God to persuade,
" The Trojans to defeat, and Hellas aid.
" His will there urg'd him, when the god beheld
" Th' o'erwearied Grecians to their fleet repell'd.
" But if thou deign'st direct, whate'er the way,
" Warn'd by my voice, the god shall Jove obey."

That soothing speech her lord's fierce rage allay'd:
" Oh were we thus," Saturnius smiling said,
" Were Jove and Juno mutually inclin'd
" Thus on their thrones united, mind with mind,
" Then should the god, howe'er averse his will,
" Turn where we guide, and our behest fulfil.
" If true thy word, away! from heaven's abode
" Here speed wing'd Iris, and the Archer God—
" Let Iris to th' Achæans wing her way,
" And bid the Sea God my command obey;

" Bid him from battle cease, return again,
" And on his ocean throne in peace remain—
" Bid Phœbus join yon host, and brace again
" Brave Hector, Grecia's battle to sustain,
" And, the keen sense of pain forgot, once more
" To all its former pow'r each limb restore;
" So shall his strength, by heav'nly aid renewed,
" Turn back the Grecians, to their tents pursued:
" Till the scar'd warriors, close and closer prest,
" Fall round the fleet that guards Pelides' rest.
" Then, arm'd by him, Patroclus shall advance
" Foredoom'd to bleed beneath th' Hectorean lance,
" At Ilion's portal pour his latest breath,
" And close his conquest with Sarpedon's death.
" Then shall Achilles glare, with stern disdain,
" On Hector dying for Patroclus slain.
" From that ill-fated hour, from Grecia's fleet
" Troy's trembling host shall ceaselessly retreat,
" Till, by Minerva's art, the sons of Greece
" Raze Ilion's tow'rs, and war's long labours cease.
" Till that dread hour inflexible my rage,
" Nor shall a god for Greece the battle wage
" Ere, by the sea nymph's late entreaties won,
" I consummate the pray'r of Peleus' son,
" Pledg'd by this brow, that sanctions all I swore,
" To glorify Achilles more and more."

He spake: and Juno, in her upward flight
From Ida's summit, reach'd the Olympian height:
And, as a traveller delights to trace
Realms long past o'er, and many a distant place,
Sweeps here and there, by space nor time confin'd,
Swift as the thought that traverses his mind;
Thus Juno flew, and in the realms above
Found the gods feasting, in the court of Jove:
All rose at her approach, and soon as seen,
With proffer'd goblets hail'd the advancing queen;
But from fair Themis' hand, the Nectar bowl
Alone seem'd grateful to her wounded soul,—
For Themis, foremost greeting her return,
Flew from her sov'reign's lip the truth to learn.

"Why thus alarm'd"—she cried—"why hither fled?
"Has thy harsh consort fill'd thy soul with dread?"

"Thou know'st,"—the goddess answer'd—"why inquire?
"The pride and harshness of th' Olympian sire.
"Resume thy throne, heaven's festive pleasures guide,
"And o'er the banquet of the gods preside,
"Soon shall by thee, and all the gods, be heard
"The dire denouncing of Jove's wrathful word,
"That word, whose threats not man alone appall,
"But darken with dismay heaven's festive hall."

She spake: but ere her speech had reach'd its close,
Deep indignation mid the gods arose;
A smile past o'er her lip, but dark her brow,
While her words flam'd with passion's fiery glow:

" Fools! why this murmur, why this senseless rage?
" Will such the tyrant's cruelty assuage?
" Lone in his terror low'rs th' unbending Jove,
" No pow'r can force him, no persuasion move;
" We, all, most weak, most worthless in his sight,
" He, god alone, omnipotent in might.
" Then bear it, as ye must, the inflicted blow,
" Such as shall cleave the heart of Mars with woe,
" Whose son, most lov'd, now welters in his gore:
" Mars, thou shalt view Ascalaphus no more."

She spake; while Mars, with woe and rage inflam'd,
Struck with both hands his thighs, and thus exclaim'd:

" Blame me not gods, if now, by vengeance fir'd,
" I join the battle, where my son expir'd,
" Though Jove there strike me with his lightning flame,
" And crush in dust and blood my blasted frame."

He spake: and, mail'd in panoply of war,
Bad Fear and Horror yoke his fiery car.

Then fiercer war, and ever-during ire,
Had arm'd th' immortals 'gainst the Olympian Sire,
Had not Minerva, springing from her throne,
Though heaven's wide portal to the War God flown,
Seized the bright casque, that helmeted his head,
Seized the broad shield athwart his shoulder spread,
Forc'd from his grasp his lance, apart remov'd,
And with keen taunt contemptuous thus reprov'd:

" Rash, senseless maniac! to the future blind,
" Why rush on ruin with infuriate mind?
" Hast thou forgôt, but now from Juno heard,
" The dire denouncement of th' Almighty word?
" Must thou Jove's vengeance by experience learn,
" And back, disgrac'd, perforce to heav'n return?
" Not on thy brow alone shall ruin fall,
" The tempest of his wrath shall burst o'er all;
" Thenceforth, nor Greece, nor Troy, shall trouble Jove,
" Nor aught but vengeance wasting all above,
" Guiltless or guilty, all shall feed his fire,
" His vengeance feel, but not exhaust his ire.
" Then rage not for thy son, superior far
" Full many a mighty hero, fam'd in war,
" Has ere his death expir'd, and shall expire,
" And man must perish, though a god his sire."

The god obey'd; then heav'n's imperial Queen
Summoned Apollo from the festive scene,
And Iris, messenger of God and man,
And, Jove's high word fulfilling, thus began:

" Jove bids you forth, speed on, without delay,
" To Ida's summit wing your viewless way,
" There, in his presence, Jove's command fulfil,
" And strictly perfect his Almighty will."

She spake: the gods to Ida's summit sped,
Whose streams refresh'd the herds her coverts bred,
Then pass'd where Jove on Gargarus round him wreath'd
A canopy of clouds, that fragrance breath'd,
There stood before his throne; well pleas'd the god
Beheld them, waiting his almighty nod.

Then first to Iris spoke: " Hence, speed thy flight
" To Ocean's lord, and my command recite:
" Bid him withdraw, forsake the battle plain,
" To heaven ascend, or dive beneath the main.
" Should Neptune linger, nor my word obey,
" Bid him the doom impending deeply weigh,
" Tell him, tho' girt with strength, that strength how vain
" The Thunderer in his fury to sustain.

" Tell him, by right of birth, I reign alone;
" Tell him, superior power upholds my throne;
" Bid him, tho' loath to yield, this arm revere,
" And dread the god whom all th' immortals fear."

Jove spake, and Iris, at the god's behest,
To Ilion flew, from Ida's lofty crest,
And as the fleecy snow, or storm of hail,
Bursts from the clouds before the northern gale,
Thus swift her airy way the goddess won,
And the stern dictate brought of Saturn's son:

" Lord of the Main, descending from above,
" Behold in me the messenger of Jove,
" The god commands thee quit the battle plain,
" To heaven ascend, or dive beneath the main:
" But if thou scorn, and dare his will withstand,
" Jove comes himself, the thunder in his hand,—
" He comes, the elder-born, the Almighty pow'r,
" But warns thee to avoid that fatal hour;
" Dare not with him contend, his will revere,
" And dread the god whom all th' immortals fear."

Thus Iris spake, when wrathfully inflamed,
The Monarch of the Ocean thus exclaim'd:

" Tho' great the god, why force my will,—why scorn
" A brother god, to equal glory born.
" Three sons of Saturn, sprung from Rhea's bed,
" Jove, Neptune, and the god who rules the dead,
" His parted empire gave each separate heir
" A separate realm, and undisputed share.
" My lot—to rule perpetual o'er the main;
" O'er hell's dark region, Pluto spreads his reign;
" The sovereignty of Jove, th' extent of heaven:
" To all, the earth and wide Olympus given.
" I breathe not at Jove's nod, in peace at rest
" Be the vast heaven by his sole rule possest;
" But not o'er me, as powerless to withstand,
" Let Jove stretch forth the terror of his hand:
" Let him, as suits his mood, exhaust his ire
" On those who call th' Olympian god their sire.
" His sons, perforce, must Jove's harsh menace hear,
" And dire his threatenings in a daughter's ear."

Him Iris answer'd: " Lord of Ocean, say,
" Shall I to Jove these scornful words convey?
" Subdue thy rage; the prudent timely yield,
" Nor rouse the furies that the first-born shield."

" Iris"—the Sea God answer'd—" Nymph divine,
" Pure flows such counsel from a lip like thine.

" Not light the profit, when the message brought
" Comes from a messenger with wisdom fraught.
" But deep I feel th' insufferable blow,
" That racks my heart, and fills my soul with woe,
" When Jove's harsh anger and opprobrious scorn
" Insults a God, to equal honour born.
" Yet I submit, tho' loath, but witness thou,
" Witness the threat I daringly avow :
" If scorning mine, Minerva's, Juno's will,
" Hermes and Vulcan's, Jove his own fulfil,
" Proud Ilion spare, nor raze her prostrate tow'rs,
" Nor with great victory crown the Argive pow'rs :
" Eternal wars shall waste the realms above,
" Nor shall a God be reconciled to Jove."

He spake, and left, tho' loath, the battle plain,—
Left Hellas' host, and dived beneath the main.
The Grecians mourn'd; but, gladdening at the sight,
Jove bade the Archer God restore the fight :

" To Hector speed : the monarch of the main,
" Who girts the globe, to ocean hastes again,
" Flies from my wrath, else each infernal god
" Had heard our war, in Saturn's dark abode.
" Far best for him, for Jove, his just alarms,
" Than conflict with the Thunderer in arms;

" Had we once clash'd, each god-inflicted blow
" Had heaven unfixed, and wreck'd the world below.
" But thou, my Ægis grasp, with outstretch'd arm
" Spread o'er yon Greeks dismay and dread alarm:
" But Hector watch, his brow alone defend,
" Guard from all perils, all his paths attend,
" Gift with celestial aid, till Hellas' host
" Fly to their sheltering ships and crowd the coast;
" Then shall my wisdom, provident for Greece,
" Relax their toils, and bid destruction cease."

Apollo heard, with instantaneous flight,
Wing'd his swift way from Ida's topmost height,
Fleet as a hawk, that darting from above,
Fleetest of fowls, swoops, pouncing on a dove;
Thus swift Apollo flew, and Hector found,
Girt by his friends, and seated on the ground:
There, while the chief new gathered up his might,
His faithful warriors met his gladdened sight;
Jove thought on Hector, and at once the chief
Found, from the influence of that thought, relief,—
Ceased the hot sweat, that burst from every pore,
And pain, that heaved for breath, returned no more.

" Say, Hector"—Phœbus thus the chief addressed—
" Why, from thy host afar, here idly rest?

" Why in the rear, as destitute of force,
" Or turn'd by grief from thy heroic course?"

" Who art thou, glorious god?" the chief replied,—
" Seek'st thou why Hector turn'd from war aside?
" Hast thou not heard, when onward to their coast
" I chased the flying Greeks, and slew their host,
" By the vast weight of mighty Ajax thrown,
" How on my breast was hurl'd th' enormous stone,
" I fell, and saw, methought, as fail'd my breath,
" Hell's beckoning spectres at the gates of death?"

" Go in thy strength," the Archer-God replied,
" Cast from thy soul all fears of war aside;
" Great Saturn's son, from Ida's topmost throne,
" Has sent a god to shield thy brow alone:
" The golden-sworded god, whose guardian power
" Drove back the war from thee, and Ilion's tower.
" Now summon all thy horse, urge all their force,
" Full on the fleet drive their resistless course:
" I will precede, and smoothing all the way,
" Break Hellas' ranks, and fill with dire dismay."

Thus Phœbus spake, each word new strength inspired,
And Hector's soul with war's whole ardour fired:

As when, high-fed with grain, a stall-bound steed
Snaps his strong cord and flies, from bondage freed,
Strikes with resounding hoof the earth, and flies
Where the wide champain spread before him lies,
Seeks the remembered haunts, on fire to lave
His glowing limbs, and dash amid the wave,
High rears his crest, and tossing in disdain
Wide o'er his shoulders spreads his stream of mane,
And, fierce in beauty—graceful in his speed,
Flies mid the steeds that wanton o'er the mead:
Thus Hector, kindling at the voice divine,
Sprung light as air, and led th' embattled line.

As when an antlered stag, or tusked boar,
By hounds and huntsmen chased the mountains o'er,
Stands on a towering rock, in vain pursued,
Or seeks the covert of th' impervious wood;
While by the yell aroused, athirst for prey,
At once a lion bursts before the way;
Huntsmen and hounds, in instantaneous flight,
Lose, in the sense of fear, their former might:
The Grecians, thus, who thronging band on band,
With sword and lance, had bathed in blood the land,
Soon as they viewed swift Hector's lightning spear
Flash in the van of war, staid, fixed by fear.

This Thoas viewed, renowned Andræmon's son,
Who, first in valour, led the Ætolians on,
Potent alike to wing the dart from far,
Or front to front turn back th' array of war;
Nor less for eloquence than courage famed;
Such the brave chief who thus aloud exclaim'd:

" Ye gods! what wonder! Lo in arms again
" Reviving Hector rises from the slain;
" He comes, whom late our shouting warriors view'd
" By Telamonian Ajax's strength subdued:
" Again th' infuriate chief, whose ruthless hand
" Slew Hellas' sons, and strewed with death the land,
" Yet more shall slay, thus strengthen'd from above,
" Fierce Hector conquers by the arm of Jove.
" But now, by me forewarned, my voice obey,
" Bid to the fleet our force direct their way,
" Whilst we, who boast ourselves most brave in fight,
" With outstretcht spears, front Hector in his might.
" Thus rang'd, that chief, tho' fierce, shall curb his course,
" Nor madly rush on our embattled force."

They heard: and forward, Meges, Teucer, came,
Then each brave chief that boasts th' Ajacean name,

Then fierce Meriones, and, far renowned,
The mighty king by Cretan warriors crowned;
These summon forth the chiefs, the chiefs obeyed,
And, as they gave command, their ranks arrayed,
And fronting Hector stood; meanwhile their host
Past to their sheltering fleet, and lined the coast.
Foremost the Trojans rush'd, and at their head
Hector, with haughty steps, his army led,
While, compassed round with night, his guardian god
Before his steps advancing proudly strode,
And shook aloft, o'er shadowing all the field,
The blazing horror of the Ægis shield,
Which Vulcan forg'd, and gave to Jove of yore,
Gave, mail'd for war, to flame his breast before,
And turn whole hosts to flight; thus Phœbus led,
And from th' uplifted shield wide terror spread.
The Greeks collected stood, and far and wide
The clash of armies burst on either side;
From the twang'd cords, the arrowy tempest flew,
And clouds of javelins darkened on the view:
Some slew from far, some longing for the wound,
Fall'n in mid space, stood quivering on the ground.
Long as the God th' unshaken Ægis held,
The darts immingled, and the slaughter swell'd;
But when Apollo vibrated the shield
Full on their front, and filled with shouts the field,

Their hearts dissolved, and, reckless of its might,
The warrior's arm unnerved refused the fight.
As when two wolves, 'neath midnight's starless shade,
No shepherd nigh, at once the fold invade;
Thus fled the Grecians, while Apollo spread
Glory round Hector, and round Hellas dread.
Man rush'd on man; the dart that Hector threw
Arcesilaus and brave Stichius slew,
This the brass-mail'd Bœotian's battle guide,
That, to Mnestheus, heart with heart allied;
Then Iäsus and Medon's fatal wound
Dealt by Eneas, bathed with blood the ground;
Medon, the fam'd Iolcus' spurious brood,
And bound to Ajax by fraternal blood:
But when the chief had slain, in mortal strife,
The much loved brother of Oileus' wife,
Fair Eriopis, from his native land
He fled to Phylaces' far distant strand;
But Iäsus, who led th' Athenians on,
Was deemed Boukolidaons, Spheleus' son.
Beneath Polydamas, Mecisteus bled,
Polites, in the van, struck Echion dead;
Agenor, Clonius slew, and Paris sped
The shaft that pierc'd Deicous as he fled;
Beneath the shoulder blade the weapon past,
And the prone corse before the vanguard cast.

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They slew, and spoil'd the slain: the Greeks the while
Through the deep dyke, and many a bristling pile,
Fled here and there confused, and wild with fright
Rush'd o'er the barrier wall, nor ceas'd from flight,
As Hector, shouting, urg'd his host amain
To seize the fleet and leave unspoil'd the slain:

" By heaven! who lingers from the fleet apart,
" Him will I seize,—this arm shall reach his heart;
" No brother's hand shall raise his pyre, no tear
" Of a lov'd sister bathe th' untimely bier,
" But famish'd dogs shall for his flesh contend,
" And at the gates of Troy his carcase rend."

He spake, and as he lash'd each foaming steed,
And bade the chiefs their forces onward lead,
All, with the ardour of his soul endued,
With one tremendous shout, his course pursued.
On Phœbus march'd, and the advancing God
The rampart crush'd beneath him as he trod,
Fill'd with its wreck the trench, and firmly clos'd
The yawning gulph that long their course oppos'd:
And bridg'd a solid pass, of breadth and length
A javelin's cast lanch'd by an arm of strength.
Phalanx on phalanx then confus'dly flew,
The god before them towering on their view,

Who, vibrating the Ægis as he past,
The wall with all its bulwarks prostrate cast;
Swift as a child who builds along the main
A house of sand, and swift destroys again,
Thus, as it pass'd, thy foot, dread archer-god,
At once in dust the toil of armies trod.
The Grecians fled, and to their navy driven,
There staid, and rested all their hopes on heaven;
Each on the other called in turn for aid,
And, all the gods invoking, loudly pray'd:
But chiefly Nestor, gazing on the sky,
Great Jove invoked, and rais'd his arms on high:

"Jove, in fair Argos, in thy stately fane,
"If o'er the victims, on thy altar slain,
"A prayer for our return a Greek preferred,
"And thou disdain'dst not the imploring word,
"Now to thy mind that promise, Jove, recall,
"Nor Ilion raise o'er Hellas' destined fall."

Thus the aged Nestor pray'd, and awful Jove,
Mid peals of thunder, answered from above.
And as the Trojans heard the voice divine,
Their chiefs more fiercely urged th' embattled line.
As a huge billow of the boundless deep
Rolls o'er the deck that reels beneath its sweep,

When the wind rages, and the fitful blast
Drives the tost sea-surge o'er the shiver'd mast:
Thus Troy's throng'd host, when tower and bulwark fell,
Rush'd o'er the wall, and swept with hideous yell,
Lash'd their fierce coursers, hand to hand engaged,
And mid the Grecian fleet the battle waged.
These lanch'd their twice-edged spears from every car,
Those from their decks aloft sustain'd the war,
With ponderous naval poles the assault withstood,
And stain'd their brazen beaks with Trojan blood.

While from the fleet the battle rag'd afar,
And clash'd beyond the wall the shock of war,
Patroclus, where the wounded warrior lay,
Cheer'd his lone hours, and whil'd the time away,
Spread the soft balm, that, closing up the vein,
Still'd the keen throb, and sooth'd all sense of pain.
But when he view'd o'erpower'd the barrier height,
And heard the roar that hung o'er Grecia's flight,
He groan'd, he clasp'd his hands, he smote his breast,
And thus the anguish of his soul express'd:

" Tho' still thou want my aid, with thee no more
" I rest regardless of the battle roar;
" Let others tend, me sterner duties claim,
" To rouse in Peleus' son war's slumbering flame.

" Jove grant, my council may persuasive prove!
" Persuasion dwells upon the lip we love."

Then forth he rush'd. The Greeks meantime remain'd,
And the fierce onset of their foe sustain'd:
Firmly they stood, yet powerless to defeat
Troy's scantier bands, and force them from the fleet.
Nor could the Trojans their firm phalanx break,
And mid their ships and tents full inroad make.
As when a line the skilful shipwright guides,
Marks the smooth plank, and equally divides,
Thus in that fight, where neither foe prevail'd,
One fate hung o'er th' assailant and the assail'd.
With different vessels, different chiefs engag'd,
Alone 'gainst Ajax, Hector battle wag'd:
Each for one ship: but not all Hector's might
Could fire the bark, or force the chief to flight,
Nor Ajax' utmost force could turn aside
Th' Hectorean strength, th' advancing god his guide.
But Ajax' lance transfix'd Caletor's breast,
Who, with his flaming torch, had onward prest;
Thundering he fell, and from his unnerv'd hand
Dropt on the blood-stain'd corse the flaring brand;
But Hector, when he view'd, where, bath'd in gore,
The son of Clytius lay the ship before,

Thus loud exclaim'd: "Ye Trojans, Lycias band,
"Close-fighting Dardans! hear your chief's command;
"Not from this press of conflict now recede,
"On, Heroes! on, for warrior warrior bleed.
"Let not the son of Clytius here remain,
"Nor the fell hand that slew despoil the slain."

He spake, and whirl'd the lance that errant flew,
And, aim'd at Ajax, Mastor's offspring slew,
Him the Cytherian, who, by blood distain'd,
To Ajax fled, and long with him remain'd.
There, as in life, still found at Ajax' side,
Pierc'd through the brain his lov'd associate died;
Fallen from the deck, he lay in dust below,
And Ajax, shuddering, thus pour'd forth his woe:

"Lo! Teucer, well belov'd, our comrade dead,
"Who to our dwelling from Cytheræ fled,
"He who, beneath our social roof endear'd,
"We, as a parent, honoured and revered;
"Him Hector slew. Where now Apollo's bow,
"Gift of the god, and arrows barb'd with woe?"

Young Teucer heard—and onward swiftly bore
His bow already bent, and quivered store,

Showered on the foe his shafts—the arrow flew,
And great Pisenor's son, brave Clytus, slew—
Lov'd of Polydamas,—the shaft from far
Reach'd him, fierce lashing on his steeds to war;
His hand had grasp'd the reins, the chariot flew
Where the press darkened and the slaughter grew;
Hector and Troy rejoiced, but none had power
To guard their champion in that fatal hour.
Deep in his neck transfix'd, beneath the wound
Fell the prone corse, extended on the ground:
Scar'd at the clang, his steeds, that backward fled,
Dragg'd the void car, loud rattling o'er the dead.
Polydamas first heard the rush and roar,
And onward flew, and stood the steeds before,
And to Astynous gave, Protiaon's son,
And charg'd, "where'er the battle bore him on,
Nigh him to keep the coursers strict on sight:"
He spake: then mingled in the foremost fight.
But as the brass-mail'd Hector onward flew,
Keen Teucer forth a chosen arrow drew:
And—had it reach'd him, there, untimely slain,
Mid Grecia's shouting fleet had Hector lain.
But Jove, observant, deign'd the hero save,
Nor to keen Teucer's shaft that glory gave:
But, while in act to loose it, snapt the cord,
Snapt on that bow that ne'er had fail'd its lord.

Wide stray'd the brass-barb'd shaft, down dropt the bow,
And Teucer thus to Ajax breath'd his woe:

" Some god, who joys our counsels to confound,
" Struck from my hand the bow, in act to wound,
" And snapt the close-twin'd cord, I newly strung
" To scatter death on death yon host among."

" Ah friend!"—the dauntless Telamon replied—
" Leave that false bow, and cast thy shafts aside;
" Since heav'n the archer's skill has render'd vain,
" Struck down the bow, and snapt the cord in twain,
" Grasp the long lance, firm brace the ponderous shield,
" Rush on, excite the rest, regain the field,
" Let not light conquest Troy's proud warriors greet,
" But their best blood gush forth, ere flames the fleet."

Then Teucer in his tent the bow replac'd,
And on his breast the four-fold buckler brac'd,
Clasp'd the bright helm, that round his crested head
From the wide-waving horse-hair terror spread:
And, with his brass-edg'd spear, at Ajax' side
Stood in his armed strength, and Troy defied.

Hector observ'd his arrow's faithless flight,
And, shouting to his host, led on the fight:

" Brave sons of Troy, close-battling Dardans hear!
" Speed to their fleet, rush on, your fame revere!
" I, I beheld how Jove on earth below
" Shatter'd the arrows of our bravest foe.
" All must discern the omnipotence of Jove,
" Those whom he gifts with glory from above,
" And those his arm casts down, as now, this hour
" Greece falls beneath his Troy's exalted pow'r.
" On, therefore, all—and if the shaft, or spear,
" Arrest in sudden death your brave career,
" So die—your country shall adore your name;—
" Leave to your home the heritage of fame.
" Wives, children, friends shall clasp a hero's urn,
" When back to Greece the flying Greeks return."

He spake: and pour'd his fire in every breast,
And Ajax thus in turn his host addrest:

" Shame, Argives! shame! now gloriously expire,
" Or save your lives, and shield your ships from fire.
" What!—deem you, if fierce Hector seize our fleet,
" That to your Greece you back on foot retreat?

" Hear you not Hector's shouts? behold!—his hand
" Now waves aloft th' exterminating brand.
" Not to the dance, to war those shouts excite:
" What then is Ajax' counsel?—Mortal fight:
" Mix hand with hand: clash breast on breast: so die:
" Gain we at once, or death, or victory,
" Not mid the fleet our fruitless strength consume,
" And, unreveng'd, from dastards meet our doom."

At each embold'ning word that Ajax spoke,
Reviving courage in each heart awoke.
Then slain by Hector, as the warrior led
The rang'd Phocensian host, brave Schedius bled.
Then bold Laodamas, by Ajax slain,
Chief of the foot, embath'd with blood the plain;
While stern Polydamas young Otus slew,
Who the Epean ranks to battle drew:
Meges rush'd vengeful on, but fail'd his foe,
Polydamas, back-starting, scap'd the blow;
For not Apollo will'd, that there the blood
Of Panthus' son should shed its vital flood:
On flew the lance, that, piercing Crœsmus' breast,
Rung on his hauberk, as he sank to rest.
Him as the conqueror spoil'd, fierce Dolops flew,
Whose hand with dext'rous force the war-lance threw,

Of far-fam'd Lampus born, himself the son
And warlike heir of old Laomedon:
He flew, and rushing on before the field,
Smote on the central boss that grac'd his shield;
The corselet sav'd him, whose mail'd strength of yore
Phyleus from Ephyre and Selleis bore,
The King Euphetes gift: that grateful guest
Gave it to guard in war the hero's breast.
Once his, now Dolops' guard: but fiercely thrown,
Bold Meges' lance struck Dolops' topmost cone,
Smote off the crest, and cast in dust below
The horse-hair flaming with purpureal glow.
While thus they strove, each preluding his fame,
To Meges' aid the Son of Atreus came,
Stole on unseen, and, side-way, standing near,
Thro' Dolops' back and breast transfix'd the spear,
Still passing on, while prone the warrior lay,
And the chiefs rush'd to rend his arms away:—
Hector each kinsman call'd, and, deeply mov'd,
First, Menalippus wrathfully reprov'd;
He, ere yet war had Greece to Ilion led,
In peace his cattle at Percote fed,
But, when the fleet there sail'd, to Troy retired,
And from her sons surpassing fame acquir'd,

Nigh Priam dwelt, and, as his son, belov'd,
Him Hector thus indignantly reprov'd:

" Relax we thus our efforts?—takes thy heart
" In that lov'd kinsman's death no kindred part?
" Lo! how they labour to despoil the slain:
" But—follow where I lead, not here remain:
" Come: combat hand to hand: yon host o'erpow'r:
" Or Troy's brave race shall bleed on Ilion's prostrate tow'r."

He spake: on rush'd the chief, by Hector fir'd;
And Ajax thus his soul in all inspir'd:

" Be firm! now feel the warrior's noble shame,
" Let mutual reverence each bold heart inflame:
" Then, more than die, survive, while scorn and death
" Press on the dastard's rear, and close in shame his breath."

He spake: and they themselves to war inclin'd,
With firmer resolution brac'd their mind,
Girt with brass wall the fleet, while favouring Jove
There, chiefly, 'gainst their foe, his Trojans drove.
Then Menelaus Nestor's son addrest,
" Thou, grac'd with youth, speed, strength, above the rest,

" Now, in the glory of thy might, advance,
" And mark what chief shall bleed beneath thy
lance."

He spake: and back withdrew, but Nestor's son
Before the vanward rush'd embolden'd on,
Pois'd his bright spear, and as he gaz'd around,
Swift shrank the Trojans from the whizzing wound.
But not his arm an erring weapon cast,
The spear thro' Menalippus' bosom past,
On as he stept to fight; that step was death;
And his arms rattled o'er his less'ning breath.

Antilochus rush'd on, as springs a hound
To seize a fawn that bleeds beneath the wound,
Pierc'd by the hunter's shaft, as unaware
Leapt the rous'd slumberer from her ferny lair;
Thus, where thy corse, O Menalippus! bled,
The victor darted to despoil the dead:
By Hector not unseen, who fiercely sprung,
And forward dash'd the ranks of war among.
The Greek perceiv'd him, and tho' brave and bold,
Shrunk like a wolf, who slays before the fold
The shepherd, or his dog, then flies away,
Ere yet the gathering hinds pursue their prey:

Thus fled the Greek, while shouting, as he fled,
Th' Hectorean host behind the spear-storm shed:
Yet—Nestor's son, thus ardently pursu'd,
Reach'd his own ranks, and turn'd back unsubdu'd.—
Then 'gainst the fleet, like ravenous lions, drove
The Trojans, perfecting the will of Jove.
Jove melted Hellas' heart, her strength abas'd,
And more and more the exalted Trojans grac'd.
Jove will'd, high honouring th' Hectorean fame,
That his brave arm should wrap the fleet in flame.
'Twas his resolve, each deed divinely done,
And ratified the vow that Thetis won,
To view the accomplishment, and feast his sight
On a consuming vessel's blaze of light:
Then drive back Troy, her gleam of glory o'er,
And Greece to her pre-eminence restore.
Hence Jove 'gainst Hellas' ships fierce Hector fir'd,
And his bold heart with bolder rage inspir'd.
As when Mars hurls his lance, or fiercely spread
Flames mid thick woods that crest the mountain's head,
Thus while his lip breath'd foam, and red with ire
His eye-balls widely glar'd with living fire,
Fierce Hector rag'd, and round him, as he past,
The quivering of his helmet lightning cast.
Down to his aid, descending from above,
Came in his might the majesty of Jove,

And mid the press of war, him, him alone,
Rais'd to high fame, and glory all his own:
Him soon to die: for death now hover'd near,
And flash'd on Pallas' sight Pelides' spear.

Then Hector strove to break the rang'd array,
Where brightliest mail'd the densest squadrons lay;
But all his efforts fail'd, so firmly clos'd,
The Greeks in four-fold squares his strength oppos'd.
As a vast rock, whose high o'erbeetling head,
Casts its dark shade o'er ocean's billowy bed,
Withstands the winds' tempestuous blasts, and braves
The sea storm tempesting the world of waves;
Thus stood the Greeks, while bright as radiant flame,
Swift, with impetuous bound, fierce Hector came:
Dash'd on the throng, as when the storm-tost deep
Bursts on the vessel with o'erwhelming sweep,
Veils it in foam, while the tremendous blast
Roars in the shivering shrouds, and bows the mast;
The seamen dread, in doubt their lives to save,
As yawns on every side their watery grave:
Thus Hellas fear'd: but Hector onward sprung.
As a gaunt lion darts the bulls among,
Innumerous herds that indolently feed
Mid the wide pastures of a marshy mead,

Whom, all unskill'd to guard, a youthful hind
Now forward rashly speeds, now pants behind,
While in the midst, fierce springing on his prey,
The lion, piecemeal, rends his limbs away,
The rest all fly;—thus fled, divinely driv'n,
The Greeks from Hector and the Lord of heav'n.
But Hector none, save Periphetes, slew,
Who his distinguish'd race from Copreus drew,
Copreus, who oft, by stern Eurystheus sent,
On message to the strength Herculean went.
Such was the sire: the son superior far
In virtue, wisdom, speed, and force in war:
His death crown'd Hector's glory: bent on flight,
As turn'd the chief from Hector's matchless might,
His footstep struck the border of the shield,
Whose huge circumference graz'd the battle-field.
He fell supine: and harsh beneath the blow
Rang the brass helm around his batter'd brow.
This Hector heard, and fiercer onward prest,
Stood near, and plung'd his war lance in his breast.
Amid his friends he fell: none dar'd to aid,
But all withdrew at Hector's might dismay'd:
Back to their fleet they past, then stood their ground,
By the first rank of ships, encompass'd round.
On rush'd their foes; while, more and more constrain'd,
Greece sought her camp, and gathering there, remain'd,

Nor to their tents fled diverse: shame and fright,
And mutual exhortation staid their flight.
But Nestor, chief, the Grecians' guard and guide,
To each, in turn, his suppliant speech applied:

" Oh, friends! be firm. Let each revere the rest,
" Ye whom a son has lov'd, a wife has blest,
" Oh! by your heritage, your father's name,
" Whether they live, or rest entomb'd by fame,
" By them, tho' absent, I your aid implore,
" Stand in your prowess, and the day restore."

He spake: and each embolden'd warrior heard,
And felt new force from his exhorting word.
Then from their sight Minerva clear'd away
The heav'n-spread darkness that around them lay:
And all at once shone forth in clearest light,
The camp, the ships, and all the field of fight.
They saw Troy's blood-stain'd chief, and all his host,
In furious onset pouring down the coast,
Those who, o'erwearied, linger'd in the rear,
And those who forward dash'd in fierce career.
But Ajax' dauntless fortitude disdain'd
To stay where others staid, by fear detain'd:
He on from deck to deck high-stalking stept,
And to and fro keen guard unwearied kept,

And wielded as he went, with giant strength,
A pole, steel-ring'd, of twenty cubits' length.
As one well-skill'd, from many a gallant steed,
Has four selected of excelling breed,
And towards the city, mid th' admiring throng,
Lashing their speed the public way along,
Firm, without fall, alternating at will,
Swift vaults from horse to horse with easy skill:
Thus on from deck to deck fierce Ajax sprung,
While with his madd'ning cry heav'n's concave rung:
And terrible his shout that urg'd his host,
The navy to defend, and guard the coast.
Then Hector mid his ranks no longer staid,
Rush'd on, and slak'd his vengeance unallay'd.
As a dark eagle, mid the marshy plains,
Assails the long-neck'd swans, the geese, or cranes,
Thus Hector, darting thro' each adverse foe,
Seiz'd a strong galley's sable-painted prow,
Jove's arm impell'd him, onward urg'd his course,
And with their leader all his gather'd force.
Then as the conflict at the navy rag'd,
And hand to hand the immingled foes engag'd,
Thou wouldst have said, that with fresh force endu'd,
Th' untameable hosts eternal war pursu'd.
They warr'd, diversely minded, these, lest death
There, far from Greece, that day would close the breath;

But in each Trojan's breast high ardour beat,
Each deem'd the Grecians slain, and fir'd their fleet.
Thus host met host: then Hector's daring hand,
First grasp'd a gallant ship, high moor'd on land,
The ship that there Protesilaus bore,
But to his native earth brought back no more.
Fierce Hector grasp'd the stern, there close around
The battle bled, and strow'd with death the ground:
None felt the arrow's flight, the javelin's throw,
But hand to hand commingled blow with blow:
The bill, the axe, deep drank th' ensanguin'd flood,
And the large sword and twice-edg'd lance ran blood.
Here, many a glaive, huge-hafted, strow'd the ground,
Fall'n from th' o'erwearied hand that dealt the wound,
There, with the shoulder smoothly sheer'd away,
Where earth ran blood, full many a falchion lay.
But Hector's grasp still unrelaxing held
The stern, while thus the chief his host impell'd:

" Bring fire: the war-shout raise: here force your way,
" Jove to his Trojans gives th' unrivall'd day.
" Now seize the fleet that with destruction fraught,
" Year after year such woes have widely wrought,
" While trembling elders curb'd my keen desire,
' Here, mid the ships, to war, here, feed the fire:

" But—if the god then marr'd our mind, lo! Jove
" Himself now guides, and bids us onward move."

He spake: and Troy's fierce host, with fiercer rage,
Rush'd on the Greeks, and madden'd to engage:
And Ajax, as their iron tempest shower'd,
Deem'd death now nigh, and backward stept o'er-
power'd:
Stept from the deck, but on the seat below,
Pois'd his long lance, and keenly watch'd the foe:
Back drove who dar'd advance with torch on fire,
And thundering out thus loos'd his vengeful ire:

" Friends! heroes! sons of Mars! recall once more
" Your matchless deeds, and fortitude of yore.
" Deem you another host will guard your flight,
" A wall more firm than yon embattled height?
" No city nigh, that, compass'd round with tow'rs,
" May, while we rest, pour forth auxiliar pow'rs,
" But, from our realm, on Phrygia's hostile plain,
" Far off we lie, dissever'd by the main.
" What hope for life? war, war alone can save:
" Our own brave hands must shield us from the
grave."

He spake: and who at Hector's summons came,
And o'er the galley wav'd his torch on flame,
Him Ajax slew: and breathless at his feet,
Twelve warriors by his arm lay stretch'd before the fleet.

THE SIXTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Patroclus, in the armour of Achilles, drives the Trojans from the fleet, pursues their rout to Ilion, and, after his victory over Sarpedon, is slain by Hector.

THE ILIAD.

War rag'd around the ship, when, bow'd with grief,
From his stern lord Patroclus sought relief,
Sought, steep'd in tears, as from the mountain brow
Dark waters gush in ceaseless stream below.
Achilles view'd, soft Pity touch'd his breast,
As thus his soothing voice his friend addrest:

" Why weeps Patroclus? whence such sorrows flow?
" Why, like an infant's, thy unmanly woe,
" Like a weak girl's, who, all dissolv'd in tears,
" Clings to her mother's side, her hands uprears,
" Hangs on her robe, and gazing in her face,
" Detains her step, till lockt in her embrace?
" Like her's thy tears—what misery wrings thy heart?
" If mine, disclose it; if my host's, impart.

" Trusts Pthia then her woe to thee alone?
" Menœtius—yet—'tis rumour'd—sways his throne;
" Peleus yet lives, yet reigns;—their death—if dead—
" Would justify the tears their offspring shed.
" Or dost thou mourn, that Greece, her ships in flame,
" Expiates her wrong, and my dishonour'd name?
" Speak: give me all thy grief."—The chief replied:
" Thou, bulwark of our battle, Grecia's pride,
" Restrain—'tis time—dire passion's sullen mood:
" Nor, when a nation bleeds, on vengeance brood.
" Our bravest, all, from battle's fierce career,
" Pierc'd by the distant shaft, or fronting spear,
" Rest in their ships. Beneath the death-wing'd reed
" Eurypylus, and bold Tydides bleed:
" The king of monarchs, and Laertes' heir,
" Pierc'd by the lance, no more the combat dare:
" The skill'd physician toils to heal their wound:
" Thou, thou alone, Pelides, ruthless found.
" Ne'er on my heart feed that consuming ire,
" As fills thee, vainly brave, with quenchless fire!
" Whom shall thy arm, what future mortal save,
" If, unaveng'd, these fill th' untimely grave?
" No—not to thee, existence Peleus gave,
" No mother thine, a goddess of the wave,
" The deep, that hears no pray'r, th' unfeeling stone,
" Man void of pity, claim thee for their own.

" But if some prophecy, in secret heard,
" Brought down from Jove, by Thetis' warning word,
" A fear suggests, now speed me forth to fight,
" Give me thy host to beam on Grecia light,
" Give me thy armour, that, like thee array'd,
" Thy semblance chase the foe, by fear betray'd,
" And Greece, foredone with battle, breathe again,
" And the fierce onset with new strength sustain,
" While our fresh warriors, from their fleet afar,
" Force back to Troy her host worn down with war."

Fond youth! that rash desire but speeds thy doom;
That pray'r, the prelude of th' impatient tomb.—

" What word" — Pelides cried — with deep-drawn groan,
" What from thy lip, Patroclus, rashly flown!
" I dread no prophecy, nought adverse heard,
" Brought down from Jove, by Thetis' warning word:
" But my blood boils, when with insulting scorn
" Man dares dishonour man, his equal born,
" And, through pre-eminence of rank, despoil
" A warrior of the prize that crown'd his toil.
" Hence my blood boils, and unavenged ire,
" At such fell outrage, fills my soul with fire.

" Her, whom this arm made mine, her town o'erthrown,
" Her, whom Greece chose, and gave to me alone,
" Her, from these arms, that prize the nation gave,
" Atrides forc'd, and spurn'd me as a slave.
" But not past wrongs shall now my mind engage,
" I breath'd no vow that claims eternal rage,
" But that it ne'er should pause, till mid my fleet
" The battle rage, and suppliant Greece retreat.
" Go then, Patroclus! in my arms array'd
" Lead my war-breathing band, and Hellas aid.
" In yon dense cloud fierce hosts our ships surround:
" Greece flies close pent in ocean's strait'ning bound.
" All Troy, in hardihood of present pow'r,
" Streams out to seize, ere fled, this favouring hour.
" Troy views no more my crest's advancing light
" Flash on her fear, and put her host to flight:
" Else had her routed battle, as it fled,
" Fill'd every stream, and choak'd each trench with dead,
" Had Atreus' son assuag'd me:—now yon host
" Circles our camp, and crouds with war the coast.
" No more the lance Tydides wont to wield
" Maddens for vengeance, and redeems the field.
" No more from their detested throats I hear
" The war-cry of the Atridæ catch my ear.

" But Hector's shout, the slaughterer's, his alone
" Shatters the air, and calls his Trojans on,—
" Calls, as they rush, and pouring o'er the slain,
" With clamour of fierce conquest shakes the plain.
" Go then, in all thy strength, Patroclus, go,
" Rush mid the navy, and drive back the foe,
" Lest, every ship consum'd, no hope remain,
" And none return to greet their hearth again.
" Now, mark my words,—so shall transcendent fame
" From all the host exalt Achilles' name,
" And Greece to me that loveliest maid restore,
" And gifts on gifts high heap my throne before.
" The fleet once freed, haste back, nor onward move,
" Tho' wing'd by glory, and the spouse of Jove.
" Urge not, without this arm, thy rash career,
" Nor of its fame defraud Achilles' spear;
" Nor, glorying in thy might, the Trojans slay,
" Nor first to Ilion's portal lead the way;
" Lest, stern in wrath, a guardian god descend,
" Apollo's self his Trojans to defend.
" Speed back, the Greeks once freed: no more engage,
" Let hosts with hosts exhaust their mutual rage.
" Thou Jove, thou Phœbus, thou Minerva hear,
" Let not a son of Troy escape the spear!
" No—nor a son of Greece: that we alone
" Crush in our pride, and tow'r on Troy o'erthrown!"

While thus they talk'd, the strength of Ajax fail'd,
By Jove's stern will, and Troy's dense darts assail'd;
The iron storm, which round his temples broke,
Bruis'd his bright helm, that rung beneath the stroke;
While his left arm, whose strength had long time wheel'd
The brazen burden of his sev'n-fold shield,
Sank gradual down: yet, thus close girt around,
Troy fail'd to force him from the battle ground,
Tho' each o'erlabour'd limb intensely glow'd,
And the thick sweat-drops on thick sweat-drops flow'd,
As with slow breath deep-drawn, without repose,
The war-worn chief encounter'd woes on woes.

Olympian Muses! say, how first, whose hand
On Grecia's navy hurl'd the flaming brand!

Impetuous Hector, first advancing near,
Smote with huge blade the Telamonian spear,
Severing the point—in that dire woe extreme,
In vain the hero whirl'd the headless beam,
While the brass spear-point, quivering on the ground,
Sent, where it fell afar, a tinkling sound.
Then, Ajax shuddering knew, that partial heav'n
Had o'er fall'n Greece to Ilion victory giv'n,

And, forc'd, withdrew: as back the hero past,
Troy in the ship her flaring torches cast:
Swift spread the flames, and quenchless in its ire
Stream'd from the burning deck a flood of fire.
The blazing stern before Pelides flam'd,
He view'd, and smote his thighs, and thus exclaim'd:

"Rise, brave Patroclus, lo! before my sight
"The conflagration bursts in all its might:
"Speed, lest no wreck remain—none fly the coast—
"Arm, arm, while I call forth th' impatient host."

He arm'd: and round his legs first firmly brac'd
The radiant greaves, with clasps of silver grac'd,
Next fix'd the hawberk, whose star-spangled frame
Wont on Æacides' mail'd bosom flame,
Then slung, embost with silver studs, the sword,
And the huge buckler of the battle's lord:
Plac'd the bright helm on his heroic brow,
Whose crest far-seen wav'd fear on all below.
Two forceful lances grasp'd: but left alone
Achilles' spear, whose weight, strength, vastness, none,
None but Achilles' arm had pow'r to wield,
And proudly vibrate as it turn'd the field,
That Pelian ash which Chiron Peleus gave,
The battle to confound, and slay the brave.

Then bade the chieftain, him of all the host,
Whom next Pelides' self he honour'd most,
Him, in whose heart no war-shout fear awoke,
The brave Automedon his coursers yoke.
The chief obey'd, and to the chariot join'd
Xanthus and Balius, fleeter than the wind,
Whom erst the Harpy, on the ocean-shore,
The swift Podarge to young Zephyr bore;
With these Automedon, a courser rein'd,
That Peleus' son from spoil'd Eëtion gain'd,
The far-fam'd Pedasus, the brood of Earth,
The mortal rivalling immortal birth.
Meanwhile, Achilles, breathing slaughter, went,
Mailing the Myrmidons, from tent to tent.
As ravenous wolves that gorge their antler'd prey,
Drain his hot gore, and rend his limbs away,
Then rushing down in troops, their jaws all blood,
Lap with thin tongues the surface of the flood,
And from their paunch, that labours with its load,
Belch the black gore, and undigested food;
Thus the fierce leaders of each gathering band
Rush'd round Patroclus, at their chief's command:
In midst, Pelides tower'd, their fury fir'd,
And his own spirit in each breast inspir'd.

In fleet of fifty ships, brave Peleus' son,
The Jove-belov'd, to Troy steer'd boldly on,

In each sate fifty youths: and o'er each band,
True to their trust, five chiefs held high command,
Himself o'er all supreme—the first array
To battle mov'd beneath Menestheus' sway,
Son of Sperchius, stream that flow'd from Jove,
A River-God, allur'd by earthly love,
Whom Polydora, Peleus' daughter, won,
And gave to his embrace that warrior son:
Yet—Borus' heir esteem'd, whose golden dow'r
Had gain'd her hand to grace his nuptial bow'r.
The next Eudorus rul'd, clandestine born:
Fam'd Phylas' daughter hail'd his natal morn:
The beauteous Polymela, skill'd to lead
The graceful dance along the sportive mead.
Her, as mid Dian's choir the virgin mov'd,
Enraptur'd Mercury beheld, and lov'd,
Stole to her couch, and with unhallow'd arms
Reft the fair flow'ret of her virgin charms.
Thus sprung Eudorus, fam'd alike for speed,
As bold to lead the van where heroes bleed.
But when her labour-pangs had died away,
And on her infant beam'd the light of day,
Her, Actor's offspring, fond Echecleus led,
Lur'd by rich presents, to his nuptial bed:
And, to his home and heart alike endear'd,
As his own son, her sire that infant rear'd.—

The third mov'd onward by Pisander led,
Bold chief, by Maimalus to battle bred,
Hurl'd from whose arm his lance the foe repell'd,
And, save Achilles' friend, all chiefs excell'd.
Ag'd Phœnix led the fourth; the fifth, the son
Of fam'd Laerceus, bold Alcimedon.
Achilles' self their chiefs and ranks array'd,
Then to th' impatient host the hero said:

" Forget not, Myrmidons! the threat'ning word,
" That hurl'd on Ilion's sons I daily heard,
" When, by my rage detain'd, each heart on flame,
" Ye on Achilles heap'd reproachful shame:
" ' Obdurate son of Peleus! nurs'd with gall,
" ' Why in these ships the unwilling host enthral?
" ' Back with the navy bid us home depart,
" ' Since wrath relentless thus consumes thy heart.'
" Such, day by day your murmurs,—now, enjoy
" Your soul's warm wish.—War points your way to Troy.—
" Ye, in whose bosom glows a hero's heart,
" Speed to your glorious toil, to war's great work depart."—

He spake: and fir'd their souls at every word,
And the ranks thicken'd as their king they heard;

As when, stone join'd to stone, a builder forms
A stately palace that defies the storms,
Thus buckler clos'd on buckler, crest on crest,
On shield, helm, warrior, shield, helm, warrior prest.
O'er their bright helms the horse-hair, braid on braid,
Dense stream'd, and wav'd a mass of floating shade.
But, one in heart, two chiefs before the rest,
Automedon and fierce Patroclus, prest.
Meanwhile Achilles to his tent withdrew,
His chest unclos'd, and spread its wealth to view:
That bright, that beauteous chest, which Thetis gave,
When first her offspring crost in arms the wave:
With radiant mantles, and rich tapestry fraught,
And robes with gay embroidery finely wrought.
There lay the cup, whose bold embossed round
His lip alone had touch'd, his wine had crown'd,
Nor e'er to heavenly pow'r its offering flow'd,
Save when Achilles hail'd th' Olympian god.
First, fum'd with sulphur, next, Pelides gave
The goblet to the fresh and flowing wave,
Then cleans'd his hands, and, issuing forth to pray,
Crown'd it with wine beneath the light of day,
Stood in his court, and, gazing fixt above,
Pour'd the libation to all-conscious Jove:

" Jove, Dodonæan God, Pelasgian! hear!
" Thou, whom Dodona's frozen cliffs revere,

" Where the Prophetic Selli dwell around,
" And lie with unwash'd feet along the ground.
" If once, erewhile, fulfilling my desire,
" Thou, honouring me, on Grecia pouredst thine ire,
" Now grant my pray'r: here, peaceful I repose,
" But arm my friend and host, to front our foes.
" Thunderer! with glory crown him, and impart
" A hero's spirit to the warrior's heart,
" That Hector's self shall feel, and fully own
" How capable his arm to war alone:
" Not less invincible his single hand,
" Than when with mine he dar'd the host withstand.
" Grant, when the victor from the rescu'd fleet
" Has made the conflict cease, and Troy retreat,
" That the brave leader and his conquering train,
" With all their arms unscath'd, return again."

Thus pray'd the chief: Jove, half-consenting, heard,
And half-denied his votary's suppliant word,
Granted—to force th' assailants from the fleet,
But—ne'er from war alive Pelides greet—
The pray'r now breath'd, the due libation clos'd,
Achilles in his chest the cup repos'd,
Then stood before his tent, in grim delight
To feast on clashing hosts his wistful sight.

Now, by Patroclus led, his dense array,
Fir'd by keen ardour to redeem the day,
Rush'd on, like wasps who on the public road
Hive, where rash boys their guarded nation goad,
And rouse the swarms in wantonness of play,
One common ill to all who pass that way.
There, if a traveller, ignorant of harm,
Chance with unwary step the hive alarm,
All, to defend their young, a race on wing
Bursts forth, and barbs with death each poison'd sting.
Thus the fierce Myrmidons, inflam'd with rage,
Rush'd from their tents, and madden'd to engage.
Loud rose their battle roar, when, heard by all,
Burst on his shouting ranks, Patroclus' call.

" Hear Myrmidons, Pelides' comrades, hear!
" Gird on your strength: your fame in arms revere!
" So from his servants, his close-fighting train,
" Your glorious chief shall added glory gain,
" And the proud son of Atreus curse the hour,
" That saw disgrac'd Pelides' godlike pow'r."

He spake; and fir'd each heart, and all the shore
Shook, as the mailed mass, with madd'ning roar,
Burst as one man on Troy. Then deep dismay,
Reft from each son of Troy his heart away,

As their scar'd phalanx view'd Menœtius' son,
Him and his charioteer fierce rushing on,
Radiant in armour. Then the eye of fear
Saw, in Patroclus, as the chief drew near,
Pelides' self, who, reconcil'd once more
To Atreus' son, fierce stalk'd his host before:
And all in deep despair looked to and fro
How best, by instant flight, escape the blow.

Patroclus, first, Troy's thickest press among,
Where flam'd the gally's stern his javelin flung,
There smote Pyræchmes, who the Pœons led,
From Amydon, and Axius' breadth of bed:
Smote his right shoulder.—Prone, beneath the wound,
The warrior fell, and groaning, bit the ground:
Then all his host, their bravest leader dead,
From the fierce onset of Patroclus fled.
He quench'd the flame, and, following up the blow,
Left, half-consum'd, the ship without a foe.
The Trojans, clamorous, fled, and from their fleet
The Grecians, shouting, prest on their retreat.
As when the Thunderer, from the mountain's brow,
Drives the dense cloud that hung like night below,
Cliff, headland, wood, at once all blaze in light,
And heaven's rent expanse boundless bursts on sight:

Thus from th' extinguish'd flame as Troy retir'd,
Reviving Greece a brief, brief time respir'd;
Yet paus'd not war: for not in wild'ring dread
Far from the navy Troy confus'dly fled,
But yielded to necessity alone,
And firm withstood their foemen rushing on.
Now as the battle fierce and fiercer rag'd,
Chief against chief in mortal strife engag'd.
Then first, as Areilochus withdrew,
Menœtius' son the flying Trojan slew,
Right thro' his thigh's crush'd bone the javelin past,
And prone on earth the breathless warrior cast.
Then Menelaus pierc'd the unshielded breast,
And hurl'd brave Thoas to eternal rest.
Phylides view'd Amphiclus rushing near,
And staid his onset with preventive spear,
Transfixt his leg where most the muscles rise,
Cut all its nerves, and seal'd in death his eyes.
Then brave Antilochus Atymnius slew,
As thro' his flank the brazen javelin flew:
But Maris, as his brother's spirit fled,
Rush'd on the Greek, and stood before the dead:
Yet—ere he lanch'd his spear, in swift advance
Stern Thrasymede's anticipating lance
His shoulder pierc'd, each muscle stript around,
Crush'd all the bone, and stretch'd him on the ground;

Shrill rung his brazen arms, and dark and deep
Came o'er his closing eye eternal sleep.
Thus the two brothers by two brothers slain,
Sarpedon's gallant comrades bit the plain,
Amisodarus' sons, who whilom nurst
The fiend, the fell Chimæra, earth-accurst.

But Cleobulus, grasp'd by Ajax' hand,
Grasp'd, yet alive, mid Troy's entangling band,
Sank as the heavy-hafted falchion smote
The warrior's neck, and pierc'd his tender throat;
And all the blade warm glow'd, and reek'd with blood,
As life gush'd issuing with th' empurpled flood.

At once brave Lycon and Peneleus flew,
And, hurl'd at once, their erring javelins threw,
Then as their swords in close encounter prest,
The Trojan glaive, that smote Peneleus' crest,
Snapt at the hilt, the while Peneleus' blade,
Beneath the ear the hideous death-wound made,
There, wholly sunk, and dangling down, the head
Hung by the skin as Lycon's spirit fled.

Meriones, with foot of lightning speed,
Seiz'd Acamas, now mounting on his steed,

Pierc'd his right shoulder, from his chariot cast,
Where death's chill darkness o'er his eyelids past.
The brazen lance that Crete's stern monarch threw,
Thro' Erymas' gash'd mouth resistless flew,
And as it whizz'd the scatter'd brain beneath,
Broke the white bones, and crush'd the ivory teeth;
His eye-balls roll'd in gore, and life's dark flood
Gush'd from his gaping mouth, and nostrils breathing blood.

Thus Grecia's chieftains, each his victim slew,
And like voracious wolves infuriate flew,
Who gorge on lambs and kids, at random slain,
Left on the mountains by the heedless swain:
At will they slaughter, and in pieces rend,
The timid flock too feeble to contend.
Thus rush'd the Greeks, while Troy in wild affright
Fled, all forgetful of her former might.
Then Telamonian Ajax, pressing near,
Still at mail'd Hector aim'd his ponderous spear,
But, vers'd in all the science of the field,
Great Hector hid beneath his bovine shield,
Watch'd mid the battle storm, with wary sight,
The spear's bright clash and arrow's whizzing flight.
He felt the victory chang'd; yet, undismay'd,
Stood in his strength, his warriors' guard and aid.

As, after calm, dense clouds on æther swarm,
When from Olympus Jove collects the storm,
Thus from the ships Troy flew, and wild their shout,
As slaughter thinn'd, and fear confus'd their rout.
But Hector's coursers, that, like lightning flew,
Forth from the clashing throng the warrior drew,
While the deep trench close pent in narrowest bound
His host sore labouring to ascend the mound.
There the freed coursers, as the chariots broke,
Snapt short the pole, and burst in twain their yoke.
Patroclus, following, deepen'd Troy's dismay,
And cheer'd with victory shouts his fierce array:
And wild the outcry burst, where flight and fear
Choak'd all the ways, confusing Troy's career,
And darkness veil'd the heav'ns, as backward flew
The steeds, that from the fleet to Troy withdrew.
Then, as Patroclus, shouting o'er the dead,
Dash'd where the thickest throng around him bled,
Chiefs plung'd on chiefs beneath their axles slain,
And car on car harsh-crashing strow'd the plain.
O'er the wide fosse, in all their fury driv'n,
Th' immortal steeds, by gods to Peleus giv'n,
Sprung, stretching onwards, as Patroclus sped,
In act to hurl the lance where Hector fled.

As when o'er-canopy'd with night of clouds,
Th' autumnal storm the face of nature shrouds,

When vengeful Jove in fury unconfin'd
Pours down the weight of waters on mankind,
Who right and wrong confound, 'gainst heav'n rebel,
And injured justice from their courts expell:
Then, swoln with floods, their rivers all o'erflow,
Then cataracts shatter many a mountain brow,
Roar as they rush, hurl'd headlong from the steep,
And 'neath th' empurpled main man's wasted labours sweep;
Thus roar'd Troy's coursers as Patroclus' might
Staid the first phalanxes, and turn'd their flight,
In wild confusion backward to the fleet
Drove, and to Ilion barr'd their wish'd retreat:
Mid the high wall, the navy, and the flood,
Slew them, and Greece aveng'd with Trojan blood.
First Pronous smote, and thro' th' unguarded breast,
His spirit hurl'd to death's eternal rest:
His arms around him rung: then, rushing on,
Patroclus next slew Thestor, Enop's son:
While cow'ring in his car, the wretch distraught
Loos'd from his grasp the reins, nor fled, nor fought.
On his right cheek him stern Patroclus smote,
Drove thro' his teeth the lance, and pierc'd his throat,
Then plucking back the javelin drench'd with gore,
Drew forth the wretch the car's bright border o'er:

As when an angler on th' o'erhanging steep
Hooks some huge fish, and lifts him from the deep;
On his spear point thus forth Patroclus drew
And prone on earth the chief sore-gasping threw:
He fell, he died. Then an enormous stone,
By the strong whirling of Patroclus thrown,
Smote Eryalus, smash'd his inmost brain,
And clove within his casque his scull in twain:
Prone on the earth he fell, and o'er him death
Drank with insatiate jaw his parting breath.
Then Echius, Erymas, Epaltes, bled,
Evippus, Polymelus, swell'd the dead;
Amphoterus, Ipheus, Pyres, slain on slain,
Each on the other bath'd with blood the plain.

But brave Sarpedon, as the hero view'd
His beltless phalanx by the Greek subdued,
Thus stern rebuk'd: "Where fly? thus swift in flight?
"Be mine to front that victor in his might.
"Him will I prove, and know whose dreaded force
"Has thinn'd our host, and prostrates corse on corse."

Then sprung all arm'd on earth,—thus mail'd for fight,
Patroclus sprung before Sarpedon's sight:
As with wild outcries on the mountain peak,
Talons on talons grasp'd, beak hook'd in beak,

Two vultures war, thus as they onward prest
Fierce roar'd the chiefs, confronting breast on breast.
Jove view'd, and, while compassion touch'd his breast,
His sister and his consort thus addrest:

" Woe! woe! my son, of all on earth most dear,
" Sarpedon destin'd to Patroclus' spear!
" How shall I act? My mind is reft in twain:
" How! bear him living from the battle plain?
" To Lycia bear; or by Patroclus' might
" Here view him bleed beneath his father's sight?"

" What, direst god!" his queen, enrag'd, rejoin'd,
" What word unmeet betrays thy wavering mind?
" Wouldst thou reanimate, and gift with breath,
" A mortal man long since decreed to death?
" Do it; but none, no god will laud the deed;
" Yet, deign the word I speak, my counsel heed:
" Let Jove reflect, that if from Phrygia's shore
" He to his realm his son alive restore,
" That other gods, by his example led,
" Will bear their offspring from war's blood-stain'd bed:
" For now, round Ilion, chiefs with chiefs contend,
" Sprung from some god, whom thou wilt thus offend.

" But, if regardful of thy son, ordain
" That glory grace him by Patroclus slain:
" Then, when his soul departs, and cold his breath,
" Send him to Lycia borne by sleep and death:
" There shall his kindred o'er the hero's head
" The tomb and pillar raise: the glory of the dead."

She spake: nor her the sire of heav'n withstood,
But shower'd on earth in anguish drops of blood,
Honouring his son, now destin'd to be slain
Far from his native earth on Phrygia's plain.

The chiefs drew near: Patroclus' weapon flew,
And the brave hero Thrasymelus slew,
Sarpedon's charioteer; the fatal wound
That pierc'd his entrails stretch'd him on the ground.
Sarpedon lanch'd his dart, it miss'd his foe,
But Pedasus transfixt with deadly blow:
In his right shoulder pierc'd, with deep-drawn breath
Reel'd in the dust the steed, and roar'd in death.
The coursers started from their partner slain,
And the yoke creak'd, and rein entangled rein.
Then bold Automedon, in haste to aid,
Drew swiftly from his thigh his sharp-edg'd blade;

The slaughter'd courser from the chariot freed,
And, disentangling, rein'd each heav'nly steed.

On rush'd the chiefs. The lance Sarpedon threw
O'er the right shoulder of Patroclus flew,
But fail'd to wound: then, in his turn assail'd,
Not him the weapon of Patroclus fail'd;
It pierc'd the heart. At once, beneath the stroke,
As falls a poplar, or majestic oak,
Or lofty pine, that on the mountain brow,
Hewn for a mast, the woodman levels low:
Thus fell the chief, and, stretch'd his steed before,
Ground his gnash'd teeth, and grasp'd the dust that drank his gore.
As mid the herd a lion, wild for food,
Springs on a stately bull, and quaffs his blood:
The beast beneath the fangs that foam with gore
Groans as he writhes, and dies with dreadful roar:
The Lydian chieftain thus indignant lay,
And call'd on Glaucus as life past away:

"Thou, who with bravest warriors dar'st engage,
"Now prove thy valour, now pour forth thy rage,
"Brace to its utmost thy embolden'd pow'r,
"Nor pause upon the peril of the hour.

" First, mid the Lycian host each chief excite,
" Say 'tis their king, Sarpedon, claims the fight:
" Then, watch thou o'er my corse, there flame thy spear,
" Lest day and night thy horror I appear,
" And spot thy soul with shame, if hostile force,
" In prospect of the fleet, despoil my corse.
" But thou bear bravely onward, lead the rest,
" And pour in all the spirit of thy breast."

He spake, and while he spake o'ershadowing death
Sat on his failing eye, and clos'd his breath.
Then stern Patroclus, standing on his breast,
Wrench'd back the lance deep planted in his chest.
The vitals, clinging to the spear he drew,
Gush'd from the wound as forth his spirit flew.
Meanwhile the Greeks detain'd each foaming steed,
Now stretch'd for flight, and from the chariot freed:
But anguish heav'd his heart as Glaucus heard,
All pow'rless to defend, Sarpedon's word:
He grasp'd his arm, sore tortur'd with the wound
Of Teucer's shaft, that pierc'd him on the mound,
When Teucer shielded Greece; then loud his prayer
Breath'd to the archer god his deep despair.

" Hear, king! whom Lycia's peopled realms revere,
" Nor less in Troy ador'd,—Apollo, hear!

" For thou to all, like me, can'st yield relief,
" Like me bow'd down in bitterness of grief.
" Deep is this wound, my hand sore rack'd with pain,
" Still blood-drops trickle from the unstaunch'd vein.
" My arm sinks down, I can no more advance,
" Nor firmly 'gainst the foe stretch out the lance.
" Our bravest chief, Sarpedon, son of Jove,
" Dies undefended by a father's love.
" Vouchsafe, king, heal this wound, bid torture cease,
" Restore me to my strength to combat Greece,
" And as I lead my host, give Glaucus force
" To guard from shameful spoil Sarpedon's corse."

Him Phœbus heard, and sooth'd each sense of pain,
The oozing blood-drops staunch'd, and clos'd the vein.
Then with fresh courage fir'd, the hero glow'd,
And felt in every limb the present god:
First bade the Lycians with redoubled rage
Around Sarpedon ruthless battle wage;
Then mid the Trojans sternly striding on,
Met brave Agenor, and fam'd Panthus' son,
Divine Æneas, Hector brazen-mail'd,
And with reproachful words their chief assail'd:

" Now, Hector, reckless of th' associate bands,
" Who from their home, their friends, their native lands,

" Far off, for thee alone lay down their life,
" Thou leav'st them struggling in th' unaided strife.
" First to defend by arms, by speech advise,
" The shielded Lycian's chief, Sarpedon, lies;
" What, tho' Mars slew him by Patroclus' lance,
" Advance: indignant for his death, advance.
" Haste, lest the Myrmidons, on vengeance sped,
" Despoil his armour, and disgrace the dead;
" Fir'd by fell rage their slaughter to repay,
" Who, breathless mid the fleet, beneath us lay."

Straight, at his word, unconquerable grief
Fell on each heart that mourn'd the Lycian chief,
Him, who a stranger, and of alien blood,
Like Troy's own son, to bulwark Ilion stood,
Who Lycia leagued, and mid her countless band
Tower'd, first alike in courage, as command.
Fierce on they swept, and furious at their head
Rush'd Hector, raging for Sarpedon dead.
Patroclus rous'd the Greeks, and thus addrest,
With fiercer flames fill'd each Ajacean breast:

" Brave as of erst, or braver than of yore,
" Now, joy each Ajax, steep your spears in gore.

" He dies whose daring first o'erleapt our wall,
" Sarpedon dies; now triumph in his fall.
" Bear off his corse, his armour rend away,
" And those, who dare defend him, boldly slay."

Thus spake Menœtius' son; the chieftains heard,
And their souls flam'd to consummate his word.
Troy and the Lycians their dense legions clos'd,
Greece and the Myrmidons as dense oppos'd:
Host against host, to gain Sarpedon, dash'd,
Shouts mixt with shouts, on armour armour clash'd.
Jove o'er their conflict baleful darkness spread,
And swell'd the toil of war to glorify the dead.

Greece first gave way. A chief, not least renown'd
Amid the Myrmidons, first felt the wound,
Agacles' son, who erst, in happier day
O'er throng'd Budeum held majestic sway;
Yet thence to Peleus fled, his kinsman slain,
And suppliant sued the goddess of the main.
They heard: and sent him Ilion to destroy,
And with Achilles crush the host of Troy.
'Gainst him, fierce Hector, as he grasp'd the dead,
Whirl'd a vast stone that smote his helmed head,
And inly clave his scull,—down, reft of breath,
Prone on the corse he fell, and past to death.

Patroclus, furious for his comrade gone,
At once before the vanguard rush'd alone.
Rush'd like a hawk, that pouncing on his prey,
Mid daws and scatter'd starlings wheels his way.
Thus thou, Patroclus, for Epigeus slain,
Drov'st full on Troy and Lycia's shielded train.
On Sthenelaus' neck thy hurled stone
The tendons crush'd, and stretch'd the warrior prone.
Far as in peaceful games the javelin's throw,
Or hurl'd in fury on the advancing foe,
Thus far, as Hector and his van retir'd,
The Greeks bore on, by fell Patroclus fir'd.
First Glaucus, Lycia's chief, while Troy withdrew,
Turn'd back, and Calchon's son, Bathycles slew:
Hellas his dwelling, where, surpassing all,
Shone, bright with affluence, his ancestral hall.
Now, while on Glaucus' flight Bathycles prest,
The Lycian, turning back, transfixt his breast:
Thund'ring he fell, and as he shook the ground,
Troy hail'd his fall, while Grecia felt the wound.
Round him their gather'd bands the Trojans clos'd,
Nor Greece, forgetful of her strength, repos'd.
Then, by Meriones, Laogônus slain,
Onetor's son with blood embu'd the plain:
He erst, in Ilion, as a God ador'd,
Serv'd where Idæan Jove's high temple soar'd.

His jaw and ear between the javelin past,
And his eye clos'd with death's dark cloud o'ercast;
Then, as the Greek beneath his shield advanc'd
With nimble step, his spear Æneas lanc'd;
But the keen foe down stoop'd, and, forceful flung,
Deep fix'd in earth the spear behind him rung,
There swiftly glancing, quiver'd to and fro,
Till ceas'd its last vibration, soft and slow.

Enrag'd, Æneas cry'd—"My forceful lance,
"Had it but touch'd thee, soon had still'd thy dance."

"Tho' strong"—Meriones replied—"thy might,
"Thou can'st not, thou alone, quench Grecia's light:
"Thou too art mortal, and if now this dart
"Should strike, thus whirl'd, thy vulnerable heart,
"Bold as thou art, and trusting in thy force,
"Thy death would give me fame, and hell thy corse."

"Why, friend," Mœnetius' son, rebuking, said,
"Brave as thou art, with taunts the foe invade?
"No son of Troy for words of scornful breath
"Resigns the corse,—they yield not but to death.
"In war thy hand, in council use thy word:
"Now be thy deeds beheld, not threat'nings heard."

He spake, and where he past the Cretan sped;
And the press thicken'd, and the uproar spread:
As from the mountain glades far bursts the sound
When woodmen strow with crashing oaks the ground,
Not less the clash, the thunder of the field,
When sword, dart, lance, smote hawberk, helm, and shield.
None then, divine Sarpedon none had known,
As mid the conflict lay the corse o'erthrown;
From head to foot with lances bristled o'er,
Darken'd with clouds of dust, and grim with gore.
Hosts throng'd around him, like the winged storm,
When buzzing flies in stalls at springtide swarm
O'er the full pails; thus dense the numbers grew:
Nor ere from that close conflict Jove withdrew
His piercing sight: while wavering doubts distrest,
And deep deliberation fill'd his breast,
Pondering Patroclus' death: if there that day
Illustrious Hector should the chieftain slay,
Stretch'd on Sarpedon's corse, and spoil the slain,
Or death, and fresh destruction fill the plain.
At length 'twas deem'd of Jove more glorious far,
That the brave comrade of Pelides' war
Should chase to Ilion Hector and his host,
And hurl to Tartarus many a Trojan ghost.
Then Hector, conscious of unwonted dread,
Sprung in his chariot and to Ilion fled,

And wav'd his battle back, not undiscern'd
That Jove 'gainst Troy the scales of war had turn'd.
Nor then the Lycian ranks, unaided, staid,
The leaders and their host all fled dismayed;
Fled, for they saw, on that disastrous plain,
Their king mid slaughter'd heaps untimely slain:
Stretch'd on his bleeding breast lay corse on corse,
While Jove enflam'd the war's destructive force.
Then, where Sarpedon's breathless body lay,
Greece, unresisted, pluck'd his arms away,
And, at Patroclus' call, to Phrygia's shore,
His glorying train the brazen splendour bore.

Then Jove to Phœbus—"Son, at my request,
"Speed, cleanse the blood-drops from Sarpedon's breast,
"Far from the mound of lances bear, and lave
"His corse in freshness of the living wave,
"O'er his fair limbs th' ambrosial unguent shed,
"In heaven's immortal raiments robe the dead,
"And bid the twins, fleet Death and Sleep repair,
"And swift to Lycia's realm his body bear.
"There kindred hands shall o'er the hero's head
"The tomb and pillar raise, the glory of the dead."

He spake: and Phœbus swift from Ida's height,
Gain'd, at the voice of Jove, the field of fight.

Bore from the mound of spears, and deign'd to lave
His body in the freshness of the wave,
O'er the fair limbs th' ambrosial unguent shed,
In heaven's immortal raiment rob'd the dead:
And gave to Death and Sleep, who swiftly bore
To the last honours on his native shore.

Then, shouting to his coursers and their guide,
Patroclus, in the madness of his pride,
Fond man, the host pursu'd, nor reck'd the word,
The last kind counsel from Pelides heard:
Else had he 'scap'd from death. But Jove's high mind
Sways, and o'er rules the purpose of mankind:
Jove, who the brave man quails, and turns the car
Where victory at his nod first swept the war.
Thus, mid the tumult of the battle driv'n,
Menœtius' son but serv'd the will of heav'n.

Who first, who last, then breath'd their latest breath,
When thee the gods, Patroclus, call'd to death?
First fell Adrestus, next Echechlus slain,
Autonous and Epistor bit the plain,
Fierce Menalippus, and Pylartes bled,
And Perimus, and Mulius, swell'd the dead,
Nor Elasus escap'd: the rest dismay'd
Fled, all: none, none to face Patroclus stay'd.

Such then Patroclus' rage, so dread his pow'r,
That Greece had seiz'd, beneath him, Priam's tow'r,
Had not Apollo, on his death intent,
Stood, guard of Troy, on Ilion's battlement.
Thrice the fierce chief, the o'er-beetling buttress scal'd,
Thrice, by the god repell'd, his effort fail'd,
An arm immortal on his radiant shield
Struck, and back drove him staggering on the field,
And when, scarce less than god, the chief renew'd
The fourth assault, Apollo's voice subdu'd.

" Retire—Patroclus hence—not thine the fate
" To level in the dust Troy's heav'n-built gate,
" Nor his whose prowess far surpasses thine,
" The lord of battle, Peleus' son divine."

The chief withdrew, nor longer dar'd withstand
The terror of the god's far-darting hand.

The while, within the Scæan gate detain'd,
Hector his coursers' fierce impatience rein'd,
In doubt to rush on battle, or recall
Troy's gather'd host, and guard her sacred wall:
Thus as he wavering stood, Apollo came
Conceal'd in youthful Asius' vigorous frame,

Brother of Hecuba, of Dymas bred,
Lord of the realm by Phrygian Sangar fed.

"Why lingers"—thus the god the chief addrest—
"Why pauses Hector in disgraceful rest?
"Were but my strength as far surpassing thine,
"As far less strong, thou dar'dst not war decline.
"On, 'gainst Patroclus lash thy steeds—away—
"And—if Apollo aid—the slayer slay."

He spake—nor linger'd there—but once again
Labour'd mid mortals on the battle-plain.
Then Hector bade Cebriones once more
Lash his fierce steeds, and Ilion's strength restore,
And Phœbus, mingling with the conflict, gave
To Troy and Hector fame, and fill'd with dread the brave.
Hector the rest disdain'd, nor paus'd to slay,
But furious on Patroclus lash'd his way:
The hero view'd, and, leaping from his car,
While his left hand outstretch'd the spear afar,
Grasp'd in his right a rough and radiant stone,
And straining all his muscles, lanch'd it on:
It fail'd of Hector, yet not vainly whirl'd,
On brave Cebriones its vengeance hurl'd,

On Priam's lawless son, the Hectorean guide,
The brother of his battle, side by side:
And, while Cebriones yet grasp'd the rein,
The rock, that struck his forehead, crush'd his brain,
Shiver'd the skull, the brows together smash'd,
And at his feet in dust each eye-ball dash'd.
Like a skill'd diver, plunging head-long prone,
Down fell the warrior, from his chariot thrown,
And thou, Patroclus, as his spirit fled,
Thus with insulting taunt derid'st the dead.

" Heavens!—how this Trojan dives with agile ease!
" Oh were his path mid shoals that swell the seas,
" How from the deck the man would lightly leap,
" And e'en mid tempests countless oysters heap.
" So swift the plunger from his chariot sprung—
" No doubt that divers mix Troy's host among."

He spake—and, rushing on the hero's corse,
Flew with a lion's rage, a lion's force,
Who wastes the stalls, and fierce, while fails his breath,
And his breast bleeds, springs resolute on death.
Patroclus! such thy spring:—nor less enrag'd,
Down Hector leapt, and hand to hand engag'd.
They, for Cebriones, like lions fought,
Who, o'er a stag, amid the mountains caught,

War, famish'd both, both fearless—thus rush'd on
Heroic Hector, and Menœtius' son,
With mutual fury, each in mad career,
Deep in the other's heart to plunge the spear.
Here, Hector seiz'd, nor loos'd the chieftain's head,
There, by his feet Patroclus grasp'd the dead,
While, in the conflict's shock, on either side
Hosts clash'd on slaughtering hosts, and death defied.

As when in woods, that clothe the mountain vales,
Cross in their strength the north and western gales,
When sway'd with all their growth, the forests bend,
The ash, the beech, the corneil rive and rend,
Their vast limbs intertwist, and prostrate cast,
Swell with their crash the whirlwind's roaring blast:
The uproar such that fierce and fiercer grew,
When Greece and Troy, immixt, each other slew;
There earth with lances bristled, there the flight
Of ceaseless arrows spread o'ershadowing night,
And rocky fragments, battering down the shield,
Fell round the chief, and strow'd with wrecks the field,
While he in clouds of dust, along the plain
Lay largely in his length, nor grasp'd the reins again.

While rose the sun, ere yet his zenith gain'd,
Each battle with like slaughter earth distain'd,

But when his orb slop'd westering, Greece prevail'd,
And Troy shrunk back, beyond her fate assail'd,
While the proud victors from the battle plain
Withdrew Cebriones, and spoil'd the slain—
Like Mars, Patroclus rag'd, thrice onward flew,
And, fiercely shouting, thrice nine Trojans slew:
But when once more the conqueror onward sprung,
Death o'er thy brow, divine Patroclus! hung.
Stern Phœbus met thee: but amid the fray
Thou view'dst no heav'nly pow'r that crost thy way.
Deep-veiled in midnight gloom th' avenging god,
Mid the dense press unseen, behind thee strode,
Smote with strong arm thy neck, and dealt the blow
That whirl'd thy starting eyeballs to and fro:
Struck off the helm, that, rolling on the ground,
Sent up beneath the steeds a ringing sound,
And smear'd with dust and blood that tow'ring crest,
Where dust, till then, nor blood had dar'd to rest,
But, guardian of the battle, proudly spread
A glory round Pelides' godlike head.
Then Jove bad Hector that bright helm uprear,
To glorify his brow ere death drew near.
The o'ershadowing lance, beneath Apollo's stroke,
Huge, heavy, brazen-barb'd, in shivers broke:
The shield that fenc'd from head to foot the wound,
With its broad baldrick, lay along the ground.

Phœbus his hawberk loos'd, with failing breath,
Stunn'd brain, and limbs relaxing into death,
While reel'd Menœtius' son, in near advance
A Dardan thro' his back transfixt his lance,
Euphorbus, skill'd o'er all of equal year
To run, to rule the steed, and lanch the spear;
'Twas Panthus' son, who, now first train'd to war,
Had twenty chiefs unhors'd beneath his car.
He, first, Patroclus! pierc'd thee—but in vain:
Thou fell'st not there, beneath that Dardan slain.
He from the wound the ashen lance withdrew,
And with the throng immingling, backward flew,
Nor fac'd thee e'en unarm'd—a heav'nly hand
And spear back forc'd thee to thy native band.
But Hector, who beheld Patroclus bleed,
And with faint footstep to his host recede,
Rush'd from his ranks, and, with impetuous haste,
Thrust thro' and thro' the lance that pierc'd his waist:
Thundering he fell, and as he shook the ground,
Thro' all her battle Grecia felt the wound.
As parch'd with thirst, a scanty streamlet o'er,
A lion combats with a mountain boar,
At last the mighty monarch of the wood
O'erpow'rs the stubborn strength that long withstood,
Thus Ilion's mightier chief at length subdu'd
Menœtius son, with Troy's best blood embru'd:

Then o'er him cried exulting, " Thine the boast
" Ilion to waste, and o'er her prostrate host
" Drag Troy's free daughters to thy native plain,
" To consummate thy will in servile chain:
" Fond man!—but Hector's coursers in their speed
" Rush'd on before them, and from slavery freed.
" I, and this matchless spear, Troy's race defend,
" While our gaunt vultures shall thy carcass rend.
" To shield thee, wretch! Achilles' glory fail'd,
" Nor, when he sent thee forth, his word prevail'd:
" ' Go—brave Patroclus!—but return no more,
" ' Till thro' his corselet the Hectorean gore
" ' Gush on thy lance'—this, Pelèus' son enjoin'd:
" And to sure death, thee, credulous fool! consign'd."

" Vain boaster"—thus the expiring chief replied—
" Why thus exult, insulter! in thy pride?
" 'Twas Jove that conquer'd, 'twas Latona's child:
" The gods o'ercame me, and the gods despoil'd.
" If twenty Hectors had my pow'r oppos'd,
" Death by my lance had all their daring clos'd—
" Me fate and Phœbus slew—why boast my fall?
" Euphorbus pierc'd me—Hector last of all.
" Now in thy mind my boding words retain:
" Not long the vital blood shall swell thy vein.
" Now o'er thy brow stern fate and death draw near,
" Lo! Hector bleeds beneath Pelides' spear."

He spake—death clos'd his lip—and sad and slow
His spirit passing to the shades below,
Mourn'd o'er his strength, and youth, in all their pow'r
Cut off by death in that untimely hour.

Then Hector thus the insensate corse addrest:
" Why grave thy boding presage on my breast?
" Yet, haply, first, fam'd Peleus' son beneath
" The vengeance of this lance shall cease to breathe."

Then, standing on the corse, from forth the wound
Pluck'd the barb'd spear, and dash'd it on the ground:
Then with that weapon, in fresh slaughter died,
Rush'd on Automedon, Achilles' guide,
In act to wound, but him th' immortal breed
That heav'n to Peleus gave, from battle freed.

THE SEVENTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Fierce conflict for the body of Patroclus.—Euphorbus slain by Menelaus.—Hector mail'd in the arms of Achilles resists the Grecians.—Antilochus informs Achilles of the death of Patroclus.—Menelaus and Meriones, defended by the Ajaces, bear off the body.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XVII.

No—not forgetful, Menelaus view'd
By Hector's host Menœtius' son subdu'd:
But, brightly mail'd, in van-ward of the field
Rush'd on, and round the corse unwearied wheel'd:
As wheels a heifer, querulous, round her young
First-born, and fresh from pangs of labour sprung,
Thus Menelaus watch'd: and o'er the dead
Stretch'd his long lance, and orbed shield outspread,
Prompt with preventive arm the chief to slay,
Who dar'd advance to drag the corse away.
Nor Panthus' son forgot, where lowly laid,
Death o'er Patroclus cast his chilling shade,
But—boldly, nigh approaching, onward prest,
And thus, defying, Atreus' son addrest:

" Yield, Menelaus, leader, lov'd of Jove,
" Hence! from these blood-stain'd arms, thus warn'd, remove.
" None of Troy's sons, or Troy's confederate band,
" Dar'd, ere I pierc'd, Menœtius son withstand.
" Retire—let Troy to me due glory give:
" Away: or cease beneath this spear to live."

" Jove, hear'st thou this?"—th' indignant chief replied—
" Ill suits, vain boaster, such o'erweening pride—
" Not in the panther's, in the lion's breast,
" Such untam'd haughtiness of soul imprest,
" Not in the boar, whose strength inflames his rage,
" Foams for the fight, and maddens to engage,
" As swells in Panthus' sons—yet, youth's warm glow
" Not long illumin'd Hyperenor's brow,
" When the insulting chieftain dar'd withstand,
" And deem'd me weakest of the warlike band.
" But he, methinks, ne'er hast'ning from the slain,
" Rejoic'd his beauteous bride and sire again.
" Thus—if thou dare resist: thou liv'st not long:
" Haste, fly for refuge mid Troy's countless throng.
" Hence:—lest dire ill ensue—avoid the blow:
" E'en fools, by suffering taught, their folly know."

He spake—but mov'd him not—Euphorbus stood—
" Expiate" — he cried — " thy guilt — my brother's blood—
" Thou vaunt'st his blooming bride a widow left,
" His parents' anguish, of their son bereft;
" Yet—I might yield that widow'd bride relief,
" And turn the current of parental grief,
" If I, to Panthus and fair Phrontis bore
" Thy ghastly head, and armour grim'd with gore.
" Not long the contest waits: not long untried
" What terror can avail, or force decide."

He spake: and smote his shield—the brass unbroke,
Turn'd back the spear-point's ineffectual stroke.
The Greek, then Jove addrest, and forceful smote,
As back Euphorbus stept, his fronted throat,
Prest on the blow, and with fresh strength endu'd,
Drove through his tender neck the barb with blood embru'd—
He fell: harsh bray'd his arms: and blood-drops glow'd
On his bright hair, that like the Graces flow'd:
Where gold and silver's intertwining braid,
With artful elegance his locks array'd.
As a fair olive, set in kindliest earth,
Fed by the fresh springs, branches into birth,
Where each soft wind, with undulating play,
Breathes on the flow'rets silvering o'er the spray:

But by fierce blasts, uprooted, whirl'd around,
Lies in its bloom, extended on the ground:
Thus in his beauty young Euphorbus lay,
When the fell conqueror reft his arms away.
As mid the herd, where bullocks graze around,
A mountain lion with resistless bound
Springs, grasps their lord, his neck asunder breaks,
His entrails gorges, and deep-draining, slakes
In floods of gore his thirst: while far away
The shepherd's clamour, and their mastiffs bay,
Nor dare, dismay'd, draw near: not less dismay'd
Troy, where Atrides rag'd, her battle staid—
Then had the spoiler born in scornful pride
The arms away, but envious heav'n denied:
Apollo's self, disguis'd in mortal frame,
Like Mentes, leader of Ciconia, came,
And Hector thus excited: "Vain thy speed
"Pursues the coursers of celestial breed:
"None can their fury rein, no son of earth,
"None, save Achilles of immortal birth.
"Yet—while thou idly labourest, Atreus' son
"From Ilion's bravest chief has glory won,
"And, circling round Patroclus, swell'd the slain
"With Panthus bleeding on the battle-plain."

Thus spake Apollo, and th' impatient god,
Where mortals mix'd in conflict sternly strode,

Fierce Hector flam'd, gaz'd round, and straightway knew
The chief who from the dead the arms withdrew,
And the pale corse that lay along the ground,
While the fresh blood reek'd welling from the wound:
Then, like a torrent of Vulcanian fire,
Rush'd thro the van fierce roaring in his ire.
That rush, that roar, thrill'd Menelaus' breast,
Who inly thus his secret heart address:

" If I these arms abandon, leave my prize,
" And him, who slaughter'd for my glory lies,
" Thee, brave Patroclus! should some Greek discern,
" How, at his insult, would my spirit burn!
" But—if 'gainst Hector, and Troy's gather'd band,
" Thus sham'd, I fight, how, sole, a host withstand!
" Yet—why this doubt?—Who dares a chief oppose
" Led by a god, a god's wing'd vengeance knows.
" Let then no Greek reproach, if now I yield
" To Hector and his god the unequal field.
" But—might I hear th' Ajacean voice, once more
" We dare the danger, and the fight restore:
" Nor dread to front a god, if thus our force
" Bear to Achilles' arms Patroclus' corse."

While thus he inly commun'd, onward sped
Arm'd Troy in order'd ranks, by Hector led,
Back Menelaus stept, and left the slain,
Then, fierce returning, fac'd his foes again.
Thus, when arm'd shepherds and fierce dogs appall
A lion, backward forc'd, forsakes the stall,
Reluctantly retreating, oft returns
While his rage bristles, and his spirit burns:
Thus went the chief, and, in unyielding mood,
Firm in his strength mid Grecia's warriors stood:
There, searching round, beheld th' Ajacean might,
Fierce, in the battle's left, confront the fight,
And urge his followers, in whose awe-struck breast
The Archer-God unwonted fear imprest.
Swift Menelaus flew: "Speed, urge thy force,
"Shield we"—the chief exclaim'd—"Patroclus' corse,
"And to Achilles bear, tho' grim with gore
"Fierce Hector glory in the arms he wore."

He spake, and Ajax flam'd with added rage;
And both the chiefs rush'd on the war to wage.
Hector, the while, dragg'd off the unarm'd dead,
From the bar'd limbs to strike the sever'd head,
And feast his dogs with flesh: when o'er the field
Sped Ajax, bearing like a tower his shield.

Him Hector view'd, and, as th' Avenger flew,
Sprung in his car, and mid Troy's ranks withdrew,
And bade his host to Ilion bear the spoil,
The glorious trophy of his battle toil.
Then Ajax, o'er the corse, as Hector fled,
The huge circumference of his shield outspread;
And, in his sternness, like a lion stood,
Crost, unawares, by hunters mid the wood,
Crost, leading on his whelps, in strength untam'd,
His eye-balls whirling round with rage enflam'd,
Guard of his young, the beast wide spreads his jaws,
Knits his stern brows, and down their terror draws
Glaring in darkness: thus, in all his force,
Great Ajax stalk'd around the hero's corse,
While Menelaus, at his side, apart,
In speechless agony consum'd his heart.

Then Lycia's leader, Glaucus, onward prest,
And, sternly eyeing, Hector thus addrest:

" Hector! most fair in form, yet base in fight,
" Vain is thy glory vanishing in flight.
" Think how thy single arm, thy native pow'rs,
" Troy's race alone can guard her threaten'd tow'rs:
" Here never more be son of Lycia found
" Guardian of Ilion when yon foes surround.

" Thanks—none—no gifts of gratitude await
" Our warriors bleeding for a foreign state.
" Whom of inferior rank shalt thou defend?
" Whom?—when thy household guest, thy bosom friend,
" Sarpedon, lies unhelped: to Greece a prey:
" On whose brave arm, when bloom'd his vital day,
" Thou and thy Ilion leant; but, spent his breath,
" Thou guard'st not from the dogs that prey on death.
" Might Lycia's sons obey me, home they speed:
" On Troy destruction falls; her doom's decreed.
" But if a Trojan heart one drop retain
" Of blood that fills with fire the warrior's vein
" Who for his country fights, now, now our force,
" Would drag mid Ilion's walls Patroclus' corse.
" Might our bold efforts from the Argive pow'r
" That body free, and bear to Ilion's tow'r,
" Greece would Sarpedon's beauteous arms restore,
" And Troy his ransom'd corse behold once more.
" Know, when Patroclus fell, the comrade died,
" Friend of the hero, Grecia's matchless pride;
" But in thy fear thou fled'st, nor daredst withstand
" The dread encounter of th' Ajacean hand;
" Nor eye on eye sustain his hostile glance,
" Nor face to face front his o'erpow'ring lance."

" What!"—sternly gazing, Hector thus rep[illegible]
" Whence this rash utterance of insulting pride?
" Thee, for thy wisdom, Glaucus, I esteem'd,
" Thee once the wisest of thy Lycians deem'd:
" Now I rebuke thee, and the word disdain
" That says I dare not Ajax' shock sustain.
" The clash of arms, the roar of thundering steeds,
" When crush'd beneath their car the battle bleeds,
" These move not my firm soul, me chiefly move
" The irresistible decrees of Jove,
" Who quails the brave, and knaps the conqueror's spear
" Tho' the god first had urg'd his war career.
" Come, nigh me stand, and view, throughout the day
" If, as thou say'st, I basely shun the fray,
" Or what brave chief shall from my lance recede,
" And leave yon corse, or on Patroclus bleed."

He spake, and shouting, cried, " Bold Trojan ban[illegible]
" Lycians and Dardans fighting hand to hand,
" Now, warriors, mindful of your former fame,
" Urge all your strength, and feed th' heroic flame,
" While a brief moment I from war abstain,
" And brace Patroclus' arms, by me in battle slain."

He spake, and swiftly from the combat flew,
And caught the warriors as they slow withdrew,

Who on to sacred Troy exultant bore
Pelides' arms, stain'd with Patroclus' gore:
There stood from war apart, his mail unbrac'd,
And glory'd in Pelides' armour grac'd:
Then bade his followers back to Ilion bear
The mail that Hector once rejoiced to wear.
Now round him blaz'd the panoply of heav'n,
Th' immortal arms by gods to Peleus giv'n,
Which Peleus, now grown old mid war alarms,
Gave to his son, who ne'er grew old beneath those arms.

Him, as the clòud-compelling God survey'd
In great Pelides' radiant arms array'd,
Jove, grieving, spake: "Ah! inauspicious dèed!
"Thou reck'st not of thy death, now, now, decreed;
"But fondly joy'st his heav'nly arms to brace,
"His, the mail'd terror of the human race:
"Whose friend most lov'd thou slew'st, the brave, the mild;
"Thy insult sham'd him, and thy hand despoil'd.
"Yet Jove shall now thy brow with conquest crown,
"And compensate thy fate by high renown:
"For ne'er thy wife shall thee returning hail,
"Nor from thy breast unbrace Pelides' mail."

Jove gave the nod, and, to exalt his fame,
Fitted the armour to th' Hectorean frame.

Mars rush'd within his soul, his spirit fir'd,
In every limb fresh strength and rage inspir'd;
The host his war-shout heard, and Troy's array
Deem'd that Pelides wav'd in arms their way.
From rank to rank fierce Hector rushing on,
Urg'd Mesthles, Glaucus, Medon, one by one;
His voice Thersilochus, Deisenor heard,
Asteropæus, Chromius, caught the word,—
Phorcys, Hippothous, advanc'd to aid,—
Nor Ennomus, the augur, disobey'd.

" Hear, throng'd allies! ye that round Ilion dwell,
" Not with vain pomp the show of war to swell,
" Not to encumber with a countless band,
" I urg'd you forth, each from his native land:
" But that your arms should free, on Phrygia's plain,
" Troy's wives and children from the victor's chain.
" Hence for your luxuries I my kingdom drain,
" Your gifts to multiply, your feasts sustain.
" Now dash right forward on, all dangers brave,
" The work of war is victory or the grave.
" But who shall drag Patroclus from the field,
" He, to whose arm the might of Ajax yield,
" Him, half the spoils, my gift, shall greatly crown,
" And such as Hector's glory, his renown."

He spake: and Troy, close-serrying all her rows,
Rais'd their high spears, and dash'd against their foes:
Hope and high fame embolden'd every breast
To seize Patroclus, and from Ajax wrest.
Fools! on his corse, ere closed in blood the day,
Trojan on Trojan slain by Ajax lay.

As the bold chief th' advancing host descry'd,
" Friend"—he exclaim'd—" mid perils bravely tried,
" We, Jove-lov'd Menelaus, ne'er again
" Escape the slaughter of this battle-plain.
" Yet, not so much I dread Patroclus' fate,
" Whose limbs shall Ilion's dogs and vultures sate,
" As now our doom: so Hector rolls the clouds,
" The war-storm that each host in darkness shrouds,
" And hurls them on our brow; yet, ere we fall,
" Speed, call the bravest Greeks—if Greece yet hear thy call."

He spake: nor him Atrides disobey'd,
But, loudly shouting, bade the Grecians aid:

" Friends, leaders, chiefs of Greece! each honour'd guest,
" Who at our banquets share th' Atrides' feast:
" Ye, who the host command, and, grac'd by Jove,
" Draw down high honours from the gods above,

" Hear all! 'tis vain each singly to discern,
" So fierce around the flames of battle burn.
" Speed wistful forth, nor let the Trojan hounds
" Feed on Patroclus' flesh, and lick at will his wounds."

He spake—that call th' Oilean Ajax heard,
And foremost sprung to battle at the word:
Then Crete's fierce king, and, like the God of War,
The guide and guardian of his battle-car.
But who the countless throng can singly name,
That forward prest, redeeming all their fame?

Host fronted host, when first Troy's dense array
Dash'd on her foes, as Hector led the way.
As where a torrent, with tremendous sweep,
Bursts on the force and fullness of the deep,
'Gainst the fresh flood a wave gigantic roars,
Spouts the salt surge, and rocks the thundering shores:
Such Troy's dread shout: Greece heard unmov'd the sound,
Spread shield o'er shield, and girt the corse around,
In all one spirit, while Saturnius shed
Night o'er the splendour of each helmed head.
For ne'er would Jove, whose heart no hatred mov'd
While liv'd Patroclus, by Pelides lov'd,

To Troy's gaunt dogs his limbs unburied yield,
But rous'd his friends, and brac'd them for the field.

Troy first her foes repell'd—Greece left the dead,
But not a Grecian perish'd as they fled.
Then Troy Patroclus backward drew—in vain—
Greece at the call of Ajax turn'd again,
Whose stature, whose achievements, all outshone,
Save where Achilles all o'erpast, alone.
Ajax rush'd onward, like a mountain boar,
Whose glaring eyes and tusks that thirst for gore,
Now turn'd from flight, wide scatter thro' the glade
Hunters and hounds that dar'd his strength invade;
Thus Troy confusedly fled, as rushing on
Mov'd in his might huge Ajax Telamon—
They fled who strove in Priam's walls to bear
Patroclus' corse, and Hector's honours share.
That time, Hippothous, who, as Ilion fled,
To glad the Trojans had drawn back the dead,
And by his ancle, with a buckler's thong
That clasp'd the tendons, slowly drag'd along,
Rush'd on his fate, tho' many a wistful friend,
Who fain had guarded, shudder'd to defend.
Him, in swift onset, as the chief withdrew,
Fierce Ajax, springing thro' the numbers, slew:

Split his brass helm, too pow'rless to withstand
The burden of that lance and strength of hand:
The brain, fast-flowing from the ghastly wound,
Hung, mix'd with blood, the lance's shaft around—
His strength relax'd, and as his spirit past,
The hand that drag'd it, down the body cast,
Prone on the corse he fell, and clos'd his breath
Far from Larissa's meads yet lov'd in death—
He ne'er shall tend his parents, ne'er repay
Their love that watch'd the morning of his day,
Beneath the Ajacean spear, too soon to close
In the dark shadow of death's deep repose—
But Hector pois'd his lance, at Ajax cast;
He saw, and shunn'd its flight, that whizzing past.
Not thus bold Schedius, who, to Phrygia's plain,
Himself the bravest, led the Phocean train,
The son of Iphitus, whose sceptre sway'd
Where Panopeus his just rule obey'd.
Him Hector's javelin smote—the ponderous stroke
Beneath the clavicle its passage broke,
The shoulder's summit pierc'd—the brazen clang
Burst as he fell, and wide around him rang.
Then Ajax lanch'd his spear, the weapon flew,
And the bold son of Phænops, Phorcys, slew,
Guard of Hippothous' corse: the ponderous stroke
Pierc'd his mid waist, his brazen hawberk broke,

And thro' his entrails past: with arms outspread
Prone Phorcys grasp'd the earth, and join'd the dead.—
Troy and her chief retreated from the plain:
Greece with fierce shout drew forth, and spoil'd the slain.
Then had the Trojans, urg'd by base dismay,
Sped, by the Argives chas'd, to Troy their way,
And, by her force and fortitude sustain'd,
Greece, maugre Jove, had deathless glory gain'd:
But Phœbus to Æneas onward came,
Likest Epytis' son in outward frame,
The herald Periphas, who oft of yore
To lov'd Anchises kindliest counsels bore:—
And with that lord so lov'd, now waxing old,
By kindliest counsel still his son controul'd:

"Æneas! how"—he cried—"with gods contend?
"How, heav'n averse, the tow'rs of Troy defend?
"Hosts I have seen, who, trusting in their pow'r
"And dauntless hearts, have dar'd fate's bitterest hour:
"But ye—tho' Jove to Troy the field resign,
"Fly in your terror, and the war decline."

He spake—the chief the present god confest,
And, loudly shouting, Hector thus addrest:

" Hector! ye brave allies! ye Trojans! hear!
" Seek not—eternal shame!—yon walls, thro' fear.
" A present god proclaims that highest Jove,
" Lord of the battle, bids us onward move—
" On then, lest unresisted Greece retreat,
" And bear at will Patroclus to the fleet."

He spake: and far before the vanguard stood:
Troy turn'd, and fac'd the Greeks in fearless mood.
Then 'gainst Arisbas son, Æneas flew,
And Lycomedes' friend, transfixing, slew,
The brave Leocritus—there clos'd his breath:
But Lycomedes' spear aveng'd his death.
Nigh his fall'n comrade, Lycomedes prest,
Pierc'd thro' the liver Apisaon's breast,
The son of Hippasus, who arm'd his band
For combat from Pæonia's fertile land,
And all his host surpast, save one alone,
Who mourn'd the brother of his battle gone,
The fam'd Asteropæus: yet, in vain
The fam'd Asteropæus mourn'd the slain,
And forward rush'd: shields rang'd o'er shields withstood,
And horrent o'er the corse uprose an iron wood.
Onward from man to man there Ajax sped,
Bad none desert his ground, none leave the dead,

None war beyond the rest, but firmly stand,
Watch round the corse, and combat hand to hand.
The field with blood was delug'd, host on host
Each on the other heap'd with slain the coast:
Troy, her arm'd league, and Grecia mixt their gore,
Fell where they fought, Patroclus' body o'er;
Yet less the Argive loss, such mutual aid
Man gave to man, obeying and obey'd.

Like fire the conflict burn'd: nor day nor night
Had view'd the solar beam, or lunar light,
So hung the cloud, with darkness deeply fraught,
O'er the fam'd chiefs that for Patroclus fought.
But, other part, beneath the light of day,
Trojans and Grecians rang'd their mail'd array.
There blaz'd the sun, nor intervening cloud
Or o'er the mead or mountain cast a shroud.
They fought, they paus'd, and standing far apart,
Shunn'd as it crost the light each glancing dart;
But, in the midst, th' o'ershadowing gloom beneath,
Scarce could the chiefs, with war o'erwearied, breathe.
The while, two leaders, Nestor's sons, alone
Ne'er had the fate of fall'n Patroclus known,
But where the conflict, in its fury rag'd,
Deem'd that Menœtius' son there battle wag'd.

Not inobservant, in that doubtful day
Of Grecia's carnage, and her deep dismay,
They fought apart, so Nestor gave command,
And bade them leave the fleet and war on land.
But ne'er throughout that day the conflict ceas'd,
No momentary pause the toil releas'd:
Down each tir'd limb on sweat-drops sweat-drops flow'd,
With each fresh slaughter fresh resistance glow'd,
Each knee, leg, foot, hand, eyeball, o'er and o'er,
Around Patroclus' corse, defil'd with gore.
As when a man to many a labourer's toil
Gives the bull-hide deep soaked in unctuous oil,
They round it rang'd in circling order stand,
And strain, and stretch it with unyielding hand,
Till all its juice exude, and more and more
The new infusion penetrate each pore:
Thus here and there, in that close space confin'd,
Each host to gain the corse its strength combin'd,
These, with Patroclus slain, proud Troy to greet,
And those to bear the dead to Grecia's fleet.
O'er the slain hero uproar wild arose,
And the fierce madness of conflicting foes,
Such as with grim delight had Mavors mov'd,
Nor mail'd Minerva in her rage reprov'd.

Thus, all that day, at stern behest of Jove,
In ceaseless battle horse and horsemen strove.
Yet—while the war far rag'd nigh Ilion's wall,
Ne'er had Achilles' known Patroclus' fall:
Ne'er deem'd him dead, but watch'd th' expected hour
To greet him, living, back from Ilion's tow'r.
He knew that ne'er Patroclus might destroy
With, or without his aid, beleagur'd Troy.
Such was the secret doom Achilles heard
From Thetis, bearer of Saturnius' word.
Yet Thetis spar'd his soul, nor ere reveal'd,
That lov'd Menœtius' son should fall on Phrygia's field.

Thus round the corse the iron tempest sped,
And mutual slaughter pil'd on high the dead.

Th' Achæan voice was heard:—" Not thus retreat!
" Not thus by flight disgraceful seek our fleet!—
" First yawn the earth! more envy'd far our doom
" At once to sink forgotten in the tomb,
" Than let proud Troy bear off Patroclus slain,
" And fame eternal by such victory gain."

The Trojan voice was heard:—" If thus decreed,
" Die on the corse, none from the fight recede."

Then flam'd their souls,—war rag'd: and more and more,
Burst on heaven's vault, the battle's iron roar.
That time, apart, and from the tumult freed,
Achilles' coursers, of ethereal breed,
Wept, as they knew their wonted charioteer
Dead prone in dust beneath th' Hectorean spear;
In vain the brave Diores' warlike son,
Guide of their chariot, fam'd Automedon,
Lash'd them with many a blow, and oft in vain
Urg'd with fierce threat, or sooth'd with flattering strain:
Yet, nor to war they bent their willing feet,
To Hellespont's broad flood, or Grecia's fleet,
But, like a column o'er the dead below,
Stood motionless in agony of woe.
Thus motionless the steeds, in grief profound,
Stood, and low bow'd their foreheads to the ground,
And shed warm tears: and, as they deeply griev'd,
By death untimely of their lord bereav'd,
The wide profusion of their floating mane,
That circling swept the dust, imbib'd its stain.
Saturnius view'd their woe, his brow inclin'd,
And inly commun'd with his mighty mind:

" Ill-fated! wherefore ye to Peleus giv'n,
" To mortal man th' immortal breed of heav'n?

" Why? that ye too with mortals born to grieve,
" Should like the race you serve, like grief receive?
" Most—of all kinds that breathe, or move on earth,
" Most wretched far the son of human birth.
" But ne'er shall Hector to that beauteous car,
" Bow your proud crests, and break the ranks of war:
" Enough—that Priam's son has spoil'd the slain,
" And glorying in his armour boasts in vain:
" Jove shall your strength, your courage re-excite
" To bear Automedon from further fight,
" While by my aid proud Troy shall Greece defeat,
" Till darkness close the slaughter mid the fleet."

Jove spake, and fir'd the steeds: their stream of mane
From each rais'd crest shower'd down the dust again.
Mid either host the chariot swiftly wheel'd,
Untroubled by the tumult of the field:
While the fierce guide that mourn'd Patroclus slain,
Swept like a vulture thro' the feather'd train.
With ease thro' Troy's dense bands the coursers flew,
With ease dispers'd the host that round them drew;
But in the whirlwind of his fleet career,
No Trojan blood-drop stain'd the hero's spear:
For, all unaided, vain his single might
To guide the steeds, and poise the lance aright.

At length behind the car his comrade prest,
And thus Alcimedon the chief addrest:

" What god, Automedon, this ill design'd,
" And thus obscures the clearness of thy mind?
" Wherefore in Troy's dense van contend alone,
" Thy friend, the brother of thy battle gone?
" While glorying in his spoil, with far-heard boast,
" Mail'd like Pelides, Hector quails our host."

The chief replied: " Who, brave Laerceus' son,
" Who, like thyself, renown'd Alcimedon,
" What other Argive might assuage the ire,
" Or rule the heav'n-born steeds' ethereal fire,
" Save, when alive, Patroclus? now, no more,
" Borne off by death to Hades' sunless shore.
" Take thou the scourge, th' immortal coursers rein:—
" I quit the car, and combat on the plain."

He spake: and gave Alcimedon the seat,
And downward sprung on foot the foe to meet.
Them Hector view'd, and onward swiftly prest,
Stood nigh Anchises' son, and thus addrest:

" Guardian of Troy! lo! where the battle bleeds,
" Guides, weak in combat, drive Pelides' steeds.

" This arm shall seize them, if Æneas aid:
" None can our onset stand when both invade."

He spake: Æneas heard, and, side by side,
Each trusting in the other, death defy'd,
Rush'd onward, and beneath the bovine shield,
With brass thick plated, shook the o'ershadow'd field:
And Chromius, and Aretus' god-like form,
Pursu'd their path, and dar'd war's iron storm,
Fir'd with keen hope the charioteers to slay,
And the high-crested coursers bear away.
Fools! who thus rashly, lur'd by hope, advance,
Not bloodless ye escape the Grecian lance.
Then brave Automedon, imploring Jove,
Fill'd with fresh force descending from above,
Thus charg'd Alcimedon: " Not far retire,
" Pour on my neck the courser's breath of fire:
" For ne'er will Hector from the battle bend,
" Till his proud foot Achilles' car ascend,
" Till o'er our corse he chase the war array,
" Or in our van close life's heroic day."

Thus spake Automedon: then unappall'd,
On Menelaus and th' Ajaces call'd:

" Hear! either Ajax! Menelaus hear!
" Bid our chief warriors guard with circling spear
" Patroclus' corse, and turn the Trojan pow'r;
" Ye, from the living, ward death's ruthless hour.
" Lo! Troy's high leaders all their force unite,
" 'Tis Hector, 'tis Æneas swells the fight—
" But—to the gods the consummation giv'n:
" Mine—thus to hurl the lance—the rest, thine, king of heav'n!"

Then vibrating his spear, with all his strength
Hurl'd 'gainst Aretus' shield its massive length:
It broke the brazen orb, the baldric rent,
Nor till it pierc'd his groin, its vigour spent.
As, when with keen-edg'd axe, youth's forceful blow
Strikes a fierce bull behind his broad-horn'd brow,
Cuts every tendon, and divides the spine,
The beast in death springs up, then falls supine:
Thus sprung Aretus, thus supinely lay,
And his limbs loosen'd as he died away—
Then, forward bending, with preventive view
From Hector's lance Automedon withdrew;
Deep fix'd in earth, the spear behind him flung,
Shook, and the shaft with shrill vibrations rung,
Ere ceas'd its strength—now, with unsheathed brand
The chiefs had clash'd in conflict, hand to hand,

But the Ajaces, to their comrade's aid
Rush'd thro' the press between each parted blade;
And Troy's fam'd leaders, shuddering at the view,
Æneas, Chromius, Hector's self withdrew,
And left Aretus, where swift darted on,
Like Mars in battle, bold Automedon,
Firm grasp'd the corse, and as he spoil'd the slain,
The boaster vented thus his deep disdain:

"Wretch! I have sooth'd, inferior as thou art,
"Thus, for Patroclus' death, my vengeful heart."

He spake: and plac'd, proud leaping in his car,
The spoils, yet fresh with death, yet warm with war,
His hands, and feet with slaughter purpled o'er,
Like a gorg'd lion drunk with bovine gore.

Now the stern conflict, with redoubled force,
Deepen'd the slaughter round Patroclus' corse.
Pallas, descendent from the realms above,
Swell'd the fierce tumult by behest of Jove,
Sent Greece to aid, for Jove to Greece inclin'd,
There turn'd the current of th' Almighty mind.
As when the god athwart vast heav'n displays
His bow bright beaming with purpureal rays,

Bodement of war, or winter's fatal cold,
That stays all human toil, and wastes the fold:
Thus veil'd in purple cloud Minerva came,
Past thro' the ranks, and fir'd th' heroic flame,
In voice, in form, like Phœnix stood confest,
And dauntless Menelaus thus addrest:

" Thine shame, thine deep dishonour, thus to yield
" The brother of Achilles' battle-field,
" To gorge the dogs of Troy, at Ilion's wall:—
" Resist: and bold thyself, embolden all."

" Phœnix"—the chief replied—" time-honour'd sire!
" Would gracious Pallas grant my deep desire!
" New strength vouchsafe, and turn the iron storm,
" There would I stand, and shield Patroclus' form,
" And, rescuing from the foe, to Greece restore
" Him, whose dire fate my soul shall long deplore:
" But now, by Jove girt with surpassing fame,
" Fierce Hector rages with the force of flame."

Pleas'd Pallas heard that, resting on her aid,
To her alone the chief had foremost pray'd:
Then gave his limbs new strength, and in his breast
Th' unyielding boldness of the fly imprest,

That oft repuls'd, returns, attacks again,
And fond of human blood, fresh wounds the vein:
Not less resolv'd, the hero onward past,
And o'er Patroclus' corse his javelin cast.
There dwelt in Troy, of worth and wealth possest,
Eëtion's son, great Hector's friend, and guest,
Him, turn'd to flight, fierce Menelaus' stroke
Pierc'd, where the weapon thro' the baldric broke:
He fell, shrill rang his arms—from forth the slain
The victor drew him to his shouting train.
Then, veil'd like Phœnops, Asius' son, whose sway
Rul'd where Abydos drinks the briny spray,
Of Hector's foreign guests, guest most belov'd,
Like him Apollo came, and Hector thus reprov'd:—

"Hector, what Greek henceforth thy arm shall dread?
"Thou, who from yonder chief hast vilely fled,
"Yon Menelaus, who, infirm of yore,
"Now bears a warrior, weltering in his gore,
"Bears from Troy's van, unaided and alone,
"Podes, thy valued friend, Eëtion's son."

Grief clouded Hector's mind, yet undismay'd
The chief rush'd on, in radiant arms array'd.

Jove grasp'd his dense-fring'd Ægis, and outspread
Night, that o'ershadowed Ida's viewless head:
Loud thunders roar'd, fires flash'd, the mountain reel'd,
As the god gave to Ilion's host the field.

Peneleus foremost fled, yet slight the wound
That flesh'd his shoulder as he turn'd around,
When keen Polydamas, approaching near,
Lanch'd, grazing on the bone, the barbed spear.
Then, as Alectryon's offspring dar'd withstand,
Bœotian Leitus, fierce Hector's hand,
Pierc'd in his wrist, the warrior oft in flight
Glanc'd round, yet paus'd not to regain his might,
Forlorn of hope, that e'er his arm again
'Gainst Ilion's battle should a lance sustain.
Then bold Idomeneus, as Hector prest
On Leitus fast-flying, smote his breast,
But the mail'd hawberk turn'd the blunted stroke,
And Ilion shouted as the spear-shaft broke.—
Then in his car, as Crete's proud monarch stood,
Fierce Hector lanch'd the dart that sought his blood;
It err'd, yet struck, scarce failing of its aim,
Him, who to Troy from well-built Lyctus came,
Brave Cœranus, who oft at Merion's side
Had in his chariot stemm'd the battle's tide.

The Cretan king, when first he left the fleet,
Had forward dash'd on foot the foe to meet,
And there had fall'n, and heightened Ilion's fame,
But Cœranus, preventing, onward came,
Lash'd the swift steeds, the monarch's life to save,
But, slain by Hector, met th' untimely grave.
Hurl'd by his forceful arm, the Hectorean spear
Gave the death wound between the cheek and ear,
And as it crash'd his teeth, and sheer'd his tongue,
Loos'd, as he fell, the reins that downward hung;
These, Merion, stooping, gather'd where they lay,
And from the conflict warn'd the king away:

"Lash to the fleet the steeds, nor there disown,
"Be witness thou, our hope of conquest gone."

Then Crete's aw'd king, appall'd, with urgent speed
Drove to the fleet each fiery-footed steed:
And Ajax' self, and Menelaus knew
That Jove, that time, bad Hector Greece subdue—

"Yea"—Ajax cried—"a fool might surely know
"That harsh Saturnius glorifies our foe—
"So Jove directs their darts, all, all alike,
"Firm, or infirm of arm, a Grecian strike;

" While from our warriors hurl'd, without a wound
" Their weapons fall unheeded on the ground.
" But—now consult, how best to save the slain,
" And by our presence glad our friends again,
" Who with despairing eyes this day discern,
" Nor longer dare to look for our return,
" But deem, we ne'er shall Hector's rage elude,
" But perish mid our ships, by Troy subdu'd.
" Oh might some tried associate now appear
" To bear the tidings to Pelides' ear?
" For not as yet that chief has haply heard
" Of slain Patroclus the soul-piercing word.
" None such I view, so dense, so dark the cloud
" That spreads o'er all our host th' impervious shroud.—
" Hear me, high Jove! now drive the night away,
" Let eye be fix'd on eye in open day:
" And—if our slaughter yield thee, Jove, delight,
" Slay us—but slay us combating in light."

Jove, pitying, heard, and at the hero's pray'r
Scatter'd at once the clouds, and clear'd the air:
The sun shone forth, and in the golden ray
Burst all the battle, spread in bright display.

Then, as the light o'er either army broke,
Thus to the Son of Atreus Ajax spoke:

" Now search"—great Ajax spake—" if yet alive,
" If yet Antilochus our loss survive.
" Urge him to rouse Achilles, and relate
" Patroclus' fall, and unavenged fate."

Then Menelaus, at the warrior's call,
Reluctant as a lion leaves the stall,
Who tir'd, conflicting long with hinds and hounds,
That watch'd throughout the night their guarded bounds,
Nor e'er relax'd, nor gave the insatiate beast
To flesh his fang, and gorge at will the feast:
Onward he springs: in vain: the blazing brands,
And clouds of javelins lanch'd from hardiest hands,
His onset check, till, loth, at dawn of day,
The lion, lingering, wends afar his way.
Thus Menelaus slowly left the dead,
And sore his spirit griev'd, with fear o'erspread,
Lest Greece should dastardly resign the field,
And to exultant Troy Patroclus yield:
Much he enjoin'd, and o'er and o'er again,
Adjur'd the chieftains with exhorting strain:

" Leaders of Greece"—he cried—" each Ajax, hear!
" And thou, Meriones, my word revere.

" Oh, friends, forget not, while I loth depart,
" The tender kindness of Patroclus' heart:
" How mild to all each word when warm with breath;
" Oh, friends, forget not him, tho' girt by fate and death."

Thus Menelaus went, and glanc'd around,
Keen as the bird for vision most renown'd,
The eagle that discerns from highest air,
Couch'd 'neath her leafy form the lurking hare,
Straight downward darts, and, pouncing on his prey,
Grasps, ere it stirs, and wings its life away.
Thus, eagle ey'd, the swiftness of thy sight,
Keen Menelaus, traversing the fight,
Sought Nestor's son, and soon the chief discern'd,
Embold'ning all where most the battle burn'd,
On war's left wing:—There Menelaus prest,
Stood at the hero's side, and thus addrest:

" Hear! Nestor's son! lov'd of Saturnius! hear!
" Would that the word might ne'er have reach'd thy ear!
" Thou know'st—for thou hast seen—by Jove decreed,
" That Troy should conquer, and doom'd Grecia bleed.
" Low lies our bravest chief, Patroclus slain:
" Grief and regret, to us, to all, remain:

" Speed to the fleet, to Peleus' son relate
" Patroclus' fall, and unavenged fate:
" So may his pow'r to Greece the corse restore,
" Though Hector glory in the arms he wore."

Fixt, horror-struck, the son of Nestor heard,
The anguish of his spirit chain'd his word,
Gush'd the large tear-drops down the warrior's breast,
Yet the brave youth obey'd his chief's behest,
And gave the hero who, mid war's alarms,
Wheel'd his wing'd car, the burden of his arms;
Then onward sped, while burst the unsolac'd tear,
Bearer of evil to Achilles' ear.

Nor at that hour to yield the Pylians aid,
Thee, Menelaus, could thy mind persuade,
Tho' wearied out with war, they, lonely left,
Griev'd, of the guidance of their chief bereft.
Thou bad'st bold Thrasymede their strength sustain,
While to the corse thou turn'dst thy step again,
And mid the tumult where the Ajaces fought,
Spak'st the wing'd word with deep affliction fraught:

" Prompt at my call the warrior lately went,
" Bearer of evil to Achilles' tent:

" Yet tho' gainst Hector vengeance fire his brain,
" Can Peleus' son, unarm'd, the fight sustain?
" Now, our's to weigh, how best the corse to save,
" Ward off our danger, and escape the grave."

" Chief"—Telamonian Ajax thus replied—
" Wise are thy words, we seek no surer guide:
" Thou, and Meriones, be your's the care
" The corse to raise, and from the conflict bear:
" While I and Teucer will the shock withstand,
" Stay Troy's mail'd host, and Hector's murderous hand,
" One heart in both, unwonted yet to yield;
" Ajax with Ajax oft has turn'd the field."

They, at his voice, from earth's ensanguin'd bed,
Grasp'd in their arms, and high upheld the dead:
Loud burst the roar, as Troy with horror gaz'd
On the bold chieftains that the corse uprais'd;
All rush'd, like hounds the hunter's path before,
That thro' the woodlands drive a wounded boar,
Dash on awhile, and pant upon their prey,
Ere yet the savage, turning, fronts their way,
And stands in strength—then all, disperst, retire,
Fly here and there, nor face his eye of fire.
The Trojans thus prest on: band after band
Smote with the twice-edg'd spear, and sworded hand:

But ever as the Ajaces turn'd, and staid,
The cheek's pale hue the coward heart display'd.
None dar'd advance, nor dar'd a hope sustain,
By dint of arms the body to regain.

Meantime, the Grecian chiefs from battle bore
Thee, slain Patroclus! to their guarded shore.
War ceas'd not: dire the tumult, dread the yell,
Like flames mid populous towns that roar and swell,
Whole streets consume, and, roaring in the wind,
Leave, where they widely rag'd, one waste behind.
Not less the rush and roar, and battle bray,
Horse, horsemen, chariots, thundering on their way.
But they, like mules, who o'er a rocky road
Drag some huge beam, or mast's gigantic load,
Groan, tir'd with toil, yet, labouring more and more,
Strain, while large sweat-drops burst from every pore:
So these bore on the corse, while, prompt to aid,
Behind, each Ajax Troy's fierce onset staid.
Like a vast mound, that, thickly girt with wood,
Turns, stretch'd athwart the plain, a raging flood,
Tho' the vast waters gather'd far and wide,
Roll on the deluge in one confluent tide,
The mound, unmov'd, views all the waves expand,
Foam from its base, and flood the level land—
Thus, as Troy's rushing host the conflict swell'd,
Th' Ajacean spears the vain assault repell'd,

Yet, not the less, two leaders urg'd them on,
The might of Hector, and Anchises' son.
As in wing'd clouds, swift wheeling here and there,
The daws and starlings rend with screams the air,
When they behold, now gaining on their flight,
The outstretch'd pennons of th' o'ershadowing kite:
Thus, chas'd by Hector's and Æneas' rage,
The Greeks loud shriek'd, nor dar'd the battle wage;
In, and wide round the fosse their armour lay,
Yet the war knew no pause, nor death forgot his prey.

THE EIGHTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Thetis soothes Achilles, lamenting the death of Patroclus.—She prevails on Vulcan to forge armour for her son.—Description of the armour.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XVIII.

While yet the battle burnt with force of flame,
The Son of Nestor to Achilles came,
Came, where the mourner stood the fleet before,
And view'd, in dark forebodement, o'er and o'er,
The deed already done, and thus exprest
The secret fear that agonis'd his breast:

"Whence this tumultuous rout?—what misery, mine?
"Why throng the Greeks their ships, why war decline?
"Have then the gods that deed of horror done,
"Foretold by Thetis to her hapless son,
"That, while I liv'd, the bravest of my host
"Should, slain by Trojans, perish on their coast?
"Yes—by his rashness to destruction led,
"Menœtius' son now slumbers with the dead.

" Yet him, the flames once quench'd, I bad retreat,
" Nor dare in combat Hector's prowess meet."

As thus he mus'd, Antilochus drew near,
And his sad message told with many a tear:

" Oh Son of Peleus! thou must hear the word,
" Such as I would had been by thee unheard.
" Patroclus dies: war flames his body o'er,
" While Hector glories in the arms he wore."

Grief, at the word, and horror's gloomiest cloud
Cast o'er Pelides their o'ershadowing shroud.
He grasp'd the ashes scatter'd on the strand,
And on his forehead shower'd with either hand,
Grim'd his fair face, and o'er his raiment flung
The soil that on its splendour darkly hung.
His large limbs, prone in dust, at large outspread,
And pluck'd the hair from his dishonour'd head,
While all the maidens, whom his arm had won,
Or gain'd in battle with Menœtius' son,
Left the still shelter of their peaceful tent,
And round Pelides mingled their lament,
Rais'd their clasp'd hands, and beat their breasts of snow,
And swooning, sank on earth, o'ercome with woe:

While o'er him Nestor's son in horror stood,
And grasp'd his arm, half rais'd to shed his blood.
Deep groan'd the desperate man: 'twas death to hear
Groans that in ocean pierc'd the sea-nymph's ear,
His mother's ear, where deep beneath the tide
Dwelt the sea-goddess, by her father's side—
She heard, she shriek'd, while gathering swift around,
Came every Nereid, from her cave profound,
Cymodoce, Thalia, Glauca there,
And bright-ey'd Halia, and Nisæa fair,
Cymothoe, Spio, Limnorea join'd,
Nor Thoa, nor Actæa staid behind:
Amphithoe, Melita, Iæra rose,
Agave, Doto listen'd to her woes,
Dynamene and Proto left their caves,
Pherusa, Panope repell'd the waves,
Callianeira her lament bewail'd,
Nor her, Dexamene, nor Mæra fail'd,
Doris, Amphinome, the billows rode,
Callianassa left her deep abode.
Her grot Apseudes, and Nemertes sought,
Her shriek the far-fam'd Galatea caught,
Janassa there, and there Janeira went,
There, o'er the mourner, Orithya bent,
There Clymene, and Amathea there,
The sea-drops glittering down her wave of hair.

There every Nereid, all the sister train,
Who dwell beneath th' unfathomable main:
They fill'd the silver cave, and sore distrest
Griev'd at her grief, and smote their snowy breast.

" Hear!"—Thetis thus began—" ye, Nereids! hear!
" Learn what the anguish of a mother's tear—
" Ah, hapless mother!—him—my glorious birth—
" Most virtuous, valiant most of all on earth:
" A hero, who beneath my prosperous care
" Bloom'd like a plant gay branching free and fair:
" Him, whom I sent, my brave, my beauteous boy,
" To lead his fleet, and gain renown at Troy,
" Him, ne'er returning from Troy's fatal plain,
" Shall the Pelean dome behold again.
" His life, while yet he lives, consum'd by grief,
" Nor can the mother yield her son relief:
" Yet will I go, and from the mourner hear
" What grief afflicts him far from war's career."

Thus Thetis spake: and left the ocean cave,
And, with her, weeping, as they cut the wave,
The Nereids went, then issuing from the flood,
Each on Troy's fertile plain in order stood,
Where fix'd on land, encompassing the bay,
Round Peleus' son his station'd navy lay.

The mother heard his groan, and swiftly flew,
And, loudly shrieking, round his temples threw
Her clasping arms: "Why streams, my son, thy tear?
"Give all thy misery to a mother's ear.
"Has not thy pray'r found favour from above,
"Thy every wish consummated by Jove?
"Chas'd in vile flight by Hector's murderous blade,
"Greece throngs her ships, and seeks Achilles' aid."

"Jove, deeply groaning, Peleus' son replied,
"Jove has not there my utmost pray'rs denied—
"But what delight can these to me impart?
"Soul of my soul, the friend that fill'd my heart,
"Lov'd beyond life, Patroclus is no more,
"And he, the slayer, wears the arms he wore:
"Arms wond'rous to behold, the gift of heav'n,
"Of yore to Peleus by th' immortals giv'n,
"Gift worthy of a god that day to grace
"When the sea-goddess met a man's embrace.
"Would thou hadst dwelt with thine, beneath the tide,
"While Peleus' arms had clasp'd a mortal bride!
"Then ne'er had bitterest anguish bow'd thy head,
"A mother's for her son, untimely dead—
"Expect not my return. 'Tis fix'd my mind,
"I will not live, nor mingle with mankind,

" If Hector's life-blood, shed by me alone,
" Should fail Patroclus' murder to atone."

" What"—Thetis tearful cried—" by rage betray'd,
" What has thy word, my son, too rashly said?
" Thou, thy own death hast doom'd—when Hector falls,
" Thee, ruthless fate at once to Hades calls."

" Die now Pelides—I who basely fail'd
" When death Menœtius' friendless son assail'd.
" Far from his native land the hero fell,
" And on Achilles call'd with vain farewell.
" I ne'er shall home return—not this my grief:
" Patroclus found not from this arm relief.
" I, when Patroclus died, who fail'd to aid,
" Nor sav'd my host from Hector's murderous blade,
" I, a dead burden on earth's wearied breast,
" Lay in the lap of ignominious rest:
" I, bravest of the brave who draw the sword,
" While Wisdom counsels from another's word.
" From gods and men, be discord wholly driv'n,
" And rage, infecting Wisdom with its leav'n,
" That, first, more sweet than honey, yields a sweet,
" Then swells like smoke, and flames with inward heat.
" Such the fell spirit of th' o'erpow'ring ire
" That fill'd 'gainst Atreus' son my heart with fire.

" But—be the past forgôt: tho' griev'd, my soul
" Submits to stern Necessity's controul:
" Now forth I speed to seize that fiend of Troy,
" That slayer of Patroclus to destroy.
" The deed of vengeance done, then welcome death
" Whene'er the gods and Jove demand my breath.
" No—not the Herculean strength, the lov'd of Jove,
" Could from his neck the yoke of fate remove:
" Death and stern Juno smote him—such my doom;
" I too—when fate ordains it—fill the tomb.
" I seek not length of days: Achilles' name
" Survives in immortality of fame.
" Now groan, thou Dardan dame, nor wipe the tear
" That dews thy tender cheek, and bathes the bier:
" Ilion shall know, long-lost, I war again:
" Nor, Thetis, thou dissuade me—cease—'tis vain."

" Just is thy word"—the sea-nymph answ'ring said—
" Let Peleus' son his wearied warriors aid.
" But—the bright arms, that round thee blaz'd, adorn
" The Trojan battle, by proud Hector borne.
" Fond man, who thinks not, glorying in their pride,
" How soon that glory shall in death subside—
" Yet now a few fleet hours from war abstain,
" Till on thy mother, here, thou look again:

" Till thee, at sun-rise, once again I meet,
" And with heaven's beauteous arms, the gift of Vulcan,
greet."

She spake: nor linger'd more with fond delay,
But backward to the Nereids sped her way.

" Dive to the ocean's depth"—the goddess cried—
" Seek our paternal cave, beneath the tide:
" There greet our aged sire, my woe recite,
" While to yon heav'n I wing my upper flight,
" That by my pray'r the skilful Vulcan won,
" With arms that mark the god, adorn my son."

She spake: the Nereids plung'd beneath the main;
While from the god celestial arms to gain
The sea-nymph heav'nward flew.—Meantime, subdu'd,
And with fell roar, by Hector's rage pursu'd,
Where the broad Hellespont before them spread,
Back to their fleet the Grecian army fled—
Troy's thundering host, steeds, chariots, prest behind,
And Hector, fierce as flame before the wind.—
Thrice Priam's son, in act to drag the slain,
Had grasp'd Patroclus' foot, and cheer'd his train,
But either Ajax, with redoubled force,
Thrice curb'd his onset, and redeem'd the corse:

Yet, stern in strength, the chief now forward flew,
And, loudly shouting, ne'er again withdrew—
As, on their night-watch, vain the herdsman's toil
To drive the famish'd lion from his spoil,
Thus on their guard, th' Ajaces strove in vain
To force back Hector hanging o'er the slain:
And now the Son of Priam, unrestrain'd,
Had seiz'd the corse, and fame immortal gain'd,
Had not wing'd Iris from Olympus flown,
Unseen of Jove, and to the gods unknown,
By Juno sent, bad Peleus' son once more
Prepare for battle, and the day restore.

" Chief, fiercest of the fierce, Achilles rise!
" Go mid the conflict where Patroclus lies,
" Where most the battle burns, and all the ground
" Floats with fresh blood the invaded fleet around:
" These prompt to guard the body, those to gain,
" And to their Ilion bear in proud disdain,
" By Hector fir'd, whose arm now grasps the dead,
" On Troy's proud gate to rear th' impaled head.
" Rise! Sleep no more! Let shame thy soul enforce
" From Troy's gaunt dogs to shield Patroclus' corse.
" Indelible disgrace, eternal shame
" Thine, if dishonour thy dead friend defame."

" Say," spake the chief, " by whose divine command
" Thou, goddess, greet'st me here on Phrygia's strand?"

" I came, from Juno sent, by her alone,
" By Jove, and all the gods, unseen, unknown."

" How plunge," the chief replied, " mid war's alarms?
" The slayer of Patroclus boasts my arms.
" How slight the word that bade from war refrain
" Ere here I hail my mother once again,
" Fraught with the arms that, wrought in Vulcan's fire,
" With strength celestial shall my limbs inspire?
" None else can fit Pelides for the field,
" Save Telamonian Ajax' sev'nfold shield:
" And that brave chief, now, now, by vengeance led,
" Strews earth with slaughter for Patroclus dead."

Him Iris answer'd: " Not to us unknown
" That Troy now boasts thy glorious arms her own.
" But in thy terror mail'd, advancing near,
" Tow'r o'er the trench, be seen, and Troy shall fear;
" Troy shall retreat, the war-worn Greeks respire,
" And in that transient pause revive their fire."

Then, as she wav'd her wing, and past above,
Uprose Pelides, the belov'd of Jove.

Swift on his breadth of shoulders Pallas spread
The Ægis fring'd with death's o'ershadowing dread,
Enwreath'd a cloud of gold his brow around,
And with wide dazzling flames its circle bound.
As when the smoke's dark columns heav'n ascend
From some far isle where hosts with hosts contend,
And through the city gates, in mail'd array,
The natives pour, and war the live-long day;
But where, at sun-set, thro' each nightly hour,
The watch-fires blaze, and crest with flame the tow'r,
And to the neighbour isles the sign repeat,
The beacon beckoning to some friendly fleet:
Thus from Pelides' brow a stream of light
Flow'd forth, and far illum'd th' ethereal height.
The hero past the wall, and, seen from far,
Tower'd o'er the fosse, but mixed not with the war;
Forewarn'd of Thetis, there Achilles staid,
There shouted—and a sound, that Troy dismay'd,
Burst, as Minerva's shout his outcry swell'd,
And with unearthly fear the host repell'd.
Clear as the trumpet's voice, whose signal sound
Forewarns, ere gathering hosts the town surround;
Thus clear Pelides' voice: from man to man
Swift thro' the ranks appalling horror ran,
Started each war-steed, and, with wild affright,
Foreboding slaughter, wheel'd the car for flight:

Cower'd every guide, who o'er that crest illum'd
Saw blazing forth in brightness unconsum'd
The flames by Pallas fed. As thus his brow
Flash'd o'er the tumult in the fosse below,
Thrice burst his shout, and thrice, as doom'd to fall,
On Troy, and Troy's allies, fear fell on all.
Then twelve, the noblest Trojans, bit the plain,
By their own darts and cars confus'dly slain:
And joyfully the Greeks withdrew the dead,
And laid Patroclus on a peaceful bed.
His warriors round him pour'd their loud lament,
But, mute with woe, behind Achilles went;
While o'er his ghastly death-wounds gush'd his tear,
Gush'd o'er his brother, bleeding on the bier,
Whom, sent by him, his car, his coursers bore
Beaming with valour, but brought back no more.

Then Juno bade down heaven's descending steep
Th' unwearied sun reluctant seek the deep:
And the sun set, and from the press of fight,
The Grecians rested in the peace of night:
They too, the sons of Troy, from battle ceas'd,
And from their yokes th' o'erweary'd steeds releas'd:
Yet, ere they shar'd the feast, the chiefs appall'd
Stood, where their fear a sudden council call'd:
None dar'd repose; for on the Phrygian plain
The chief, long lost to war, had look'd again.

Then Panthus' son, the wise, to whom alone
The past was present, and the future shown,
Belov'd of Hector, born the self-same hour,
This fam'd for wisdom, that for martial pow'r,
Polydamas, thus spake: "My counsel weigh:
" I bid you back return ere dawn of day.
" Prolong not here your stay mid Grecia's fleet:
" Troy's distant turrets warn you back: retreat—
" While Peleus' son 'gainst Agamemnon rag'd,
" Less perilous the war with Grecia wag'd.
" Then mid their ships I gladly had repos'd,
" And dreams of conquest had my eye-lid clos'd.
" Now dreadfully I fear Achilles' ire,
" His out-stretch'd fury, and his soul of fire:
" He will not linger long, where Phrygia's plain
" So oft has seen each host like loss sustain:
" Troy and her sons shall view the avenger near,
" And Troy's pale women know Pelides' spear.
" Now back to Ilion speed, while yet in night
" The son of Peleus rests, nor joins the fight;
" Haste, lest the chief, in arms, at dawn of day
" Scatter our battle, and pursue its way.
" Who dares sustain th' assault, shall know his pow'r,
" And gladly rest his flight in Ilion's tow'r.
" But ne'er be mine to hear, on Phrygia's plain
" What countless dogs and vultures gorge our slain.

" Yet if, thus warn'd, you deign, tho' griev'd, retire,
" This nightly council shall fresh force inspire.
" Troy lifts her towers on high, and strongly barr'd
" Huge gates of massive mould her entrance guard;
" Rang'd on their height at dawn, our host in arms
" Shall free from battle rest from war alarms;
" While Peleus' son, if such vain visions fire,
" May round our bulwarks rage, and waste his ire,
" Thence seek his fleet when with fatigue o'erprest,
" His steeds beneath proud Ilion bow their crest.
" Ne'er shall he burst a gate, ne'er raze a tow'r:
" No, Troy's gaunt dogs shall first his flesh devour."

" Thy words"—stern Hector answer'd—" harsh appear,
" Offence and discord to a warrior's ear.
" How! yet unsated with our long repose,
" Must Ilion's walls again a host enclose?
" Time was, the world with Troy's possessions rung,
" Her brass, her gold, the boast of every tongue.
" Gone now the wealth that once her treasury stor'd,
" The vacant dome forgets its former hoard.
" Jove, in his wrath, bade Troy her riches yield
" For Phrygia's produce, and Mæonia's field:
" But when Jove bids me now high glory gain
" Mid Grecia's fleet, and force them on the main,

" Bruit not such counsel: fool! let none obey,—
" No, not a son of Troy, if Hector sway.
" But let my words in all observance find:
" Free from the toil of war unyoke your mind,
" Feast troop by troop,—yet, resolute to guard,
" Each, in his station, keep due watch and ward.
" But for his riches if a Trojan grieve,
" Let him his wealth to feed the public give;
" To all more grateful that a son of Troy
" Than Grecian plunderers should the spoil enjoy.
" But we at day-spring, arm'd in all our might,
" Will pour amid their fleet, and wage the fight:
" There, if Achilles rise to war again,
" His arm no easy conflict shall sustain.
" I shall not fly, but dare his utmost ire,
" Give deathless fame, or deathless fame acquire;
" Mars either host in equal balance weighs,
" And in mid triumph oft the slayer slays."

Troy heard and shouted, to the future blind,
Fools! Pallas cast a shade across your mind:
All lauded Hector's word that ruin brought,
But scorn'd the seer's, with prescient safety fraught.
Then while Troy feasted, far-resounding woes
Throughout that night o'er slain Patroclus rose:

Pelides, midst his host with woe o'erprest,
Clasp'd with blood-wonted arms Patroclus' breast,
And, weeping, deeply groan'd: Thus, lonely left,
A lion rages, of his whelps bereft,
Whom, when the savage prowl'd in search of food,
The hunter ravish'd from the covert wood:
Too late return'd to his deserted den,
The lion scours the wood, each glade and glen,
The traces of his foot-step to explore,
And rend him limb and limb, and drink his gore.
Thus mid the Myrmidons their mighty chief
Pour'd forth his soul in bitterness of grief,
And loud exclaim'd: "How vain each soothing word
"Which from my boastful lip Menœtius heard,
"That day when 'neath his dome I rashly swore,
"Back to his arms Patroclus to restore,
"And that Opoëis' hearth should greet his son,
"Charg'd with rich spoils from ravish'd Ilion won.
"Jove will'd it not: stern fates to both ordain,
"To redden with our blood this Phrygian plain.
"Ne'er shall aged Peleus in my natal earth
"Clasp me beneath the roof that hail'd my birth,
"Nor Thetis there again her son behold,
"But here my dust shall mix with Trojan mould.
"But now, Patroclus! since impending death,
"Ah! after thine too late, shall close my breath,

" I will not raise thy tomb, ere Hector's head,
" And Hector's arms hang o'er thy funeral bed:
" I, too, will immolate, to glut my ire,
" Twelve youths of Troy's high race before thy pyre.
" Till then where Trojan dames and Dardans weep,
" Mourn'd day and night, amid my navy sleep,
" Mourn'd by fair captives, led by us away,
" When prone beneath our spear their cities lay."

He spake: and bade the train that serv'd his state,
Place on the fire a tripod's ponderous weight,
And swiftly cleanse from lav'd Patroclus wound
The blood that mix'd with dust had clotted round.
His train the laver plac'd, there pour'd the flood,
Brought the dry logs, and burnt the crackling wood.
The flames quick curling round the cauldron came,
And warm'd the water with continuous flame,
Soon as they saw the bubbling water boil,
They wash'd the corse, and cleans'd with limpid oil,
O'er every wound the nine-year'd unguent spread,
And laid the body on its funeral bed,
O'er it a veil of finest linen drew,
And with a snowy mantle hid from view.
And all that night, around their groaning chief
They mourn'd Patroclus' lost, and swell'd his grief.

Thus they on earth; while in the realm above,
Thus Juno heard the scornful taunt of Jove:

" Celestial Queen! thy deed at last is done:
" Lo! thou hast rous'd from slumber Peleus' son.
" No doubt th' Achaians, these, so fam'd on earth,
" Born of majestic Juno, boast their birth."

" What word has past thy lip?" the goddess said,
" Why, ruthless son of Saturn, thus upbraid?
" Shall man for man accomplish his intent,
" Skill'd but in part, nor guide of the event,
" And I, the goddess-queen, who rightly claim,
" By birth, and bridal rank, the highest name,
" I, wife of Jove, sole sovereign of the skies,
" Fail, unreveng'd, nor wrong'd, Troy's race chastise?"

Thus they: the while the silver-footed dame,
Fair Thetis, to the fire-god's palace came,
Th' imperishable, brazen, starr'd abode,
Rear'd by himself, and worthy of the god.
She found him labouring at his furnace stand,
While the swoln bellows heav'd beneath his hand,
Mid twenty tripods plac'd around the wall,
Each duly rang'd in his majestic hall:
Under their base, all wondrous to behold,
His art had fashion'd wheels that flam'd in gold,

Self mov'd to pass, where gods to council call,
And back, self moving, rest in Vulcan's hall.
Now while the god the rivets wrought, to join
The handles, perfecting his bright design,
And toil'd in act to shape their beauteous frame,
The silver-footed nymph to Vulcan came.
The bright-veil'd Charis, Vulcan's lovely bride,
Th' advancing goddess, as she came, descried,
Hung on her hand, and "why," kind-greeting said,
"Fair Thetis now, this gracious visit made?
"Here seldom seen: yet come, since thus we meet,
"Where the glad banquet shall thy presence greet."
Then on a silver throne, divinely grac'd
With rarest artifice the goddess plac'd,
On a soft foot-stool gave her feet to rest,
And Vulcan call'd, and thus her lord addrest:

"Come, Thetis here awaits thee, god of fire,
"Come, nor refuse whate'er that nymph's desire."

"Here," Mulciber replied, "that goddess here!
"Her, whom so long I honour and revere!
"My kind preserver! from Olympus' steep
"When my harsh mother hurl'd me on the deep,
"From her lame offspring turn'd with wild affright,
"And fain had hid her birth from every sight.

" Then had I suffer'd, but the pitying train,
" The daughters of the god who rules the main,
" Eurynome and Thetis, kindly prest
" The outcast of a mother to their breast.
" Then nine whole years within their vaulted cave,
" My trinkets deck'd each goddess of the wave,
" Clasps, and gay rings, and chains that braid the brow,
" Wind round the arm, and wreathe the neck of snow,
" The while the ocean roar with ceaseless sound
" Rush'd as the billows foam'd that grot around,
" Where hid I lay, to all the gods unknown,
" Save Thetis and Eurynome alone.
" And bends the goddess to my dome her way?
" My gifts, all, all, the life boon shall repay.
" Pile the rich feast, while I my tools repose,
" And to receive my guest, my labours close."

Then, where he long had bow'd the anvil o'er,
While his weak legs their burden scarcely bore,
The toil-drench'd monster limpingly uprose,
The bellows still'd, and gave the flame repose,
And in a chest of silver plac'd apart,
Each tool that shap'd the wonders of his art;
Spong'd his huge shoulders, and his hairy breast,
And from his hands and face the sweat exprest,
The tunic clasp'd, and, halting as he went,
On his huge staff to prop his foot-step leant.

Two beauteous maids bore up his bulky arms,
Breath'd in bright gold, and glow'd in living charms,
Gifted with sense, voice, strength, and fully fraught
With every art by gods divinely taught.
Each at his side went, aiding, but the god
With slow step, halting, gain'd his bright abode,
Nigh the sea nymph his throne refulgent prest,
Hung on her hand, and courteously addrest:

" Fair Thetis, lov'd, rever'd, why left thy home,
" And, rarely visitant, seek Vulcan's dome?
" Speak what thy wish: thou shalt not wish in vain:
" But, if attainable, from me attain."

" Vulcan," the sea nymph, bath'd in tears, replied,
" Of all who in Olympus' realm reside,
" Is there a goddess doom'd like me to weep,
" Condemned, by Jove, her soul in woe to steep?
" What other nymph, save me, by Jove's command,
" Yok'd in loath'd wedlock to a mortal hand?
" The spouse of Peleus, who, in life's last stage,
" Sinks in the sad decrepitude of age.
" Mine other miseries:—that Jove-gifted birth,
" That son, that hero most renown'd on earth,
" Him whom I rear'd, and who beneath my sight
" Grew like a plant, fair flourishing in light,

" Him, whom I sent in glory o'er the main,
" To combat Troy in Phrygia's hostile plain;
" Him I no more shall greet returning home
" With conquest crown'd in the Peleian dome.
" Yet, while he lives, he lives alone for grief,
" Nor can the mother minister relief.
" The fair, that Grecia gave in all her charms,
" The king, Atrides, ravish'd from his arms.
" Grief rack'd his heart, the while, by Troy constrain'd,
" Greece, hid from battle, in her fleet remain'd.
" Her chiefs commissioned came, Pelides pray'd,
" Held forth rich gifts, and suppliant sued his aid:
" Pray'rs, gifts, avail'd not: prey of rage and woe,
" He left them to their fate, nor quell'd the foe,
" But sent Patroclus, in his arms array'd,
" To lead his warriors forth, and Troy invade.
" Before the Scæan gate the battle burn'd,
" And Troy that day had fall'n, in dust o'erturn'd,
" But stern Apollo, as Menœtius' son
" Rag'd, and high glory in the van-ward won,
" Th' avenging god himself the hero slew,
" And Hector gain'd the fame to Phœbus due.
" Therefore I clasp thy knees, and at thy feet
" Thus, lowly, god of fire, thy aid entreat.
" Give to my son's brief day to quell the field,
" Give the bright greaves, the hawberk, helm, and shield.

" Troy from Patroclus' breast his armour rent:
" My son now groans on earth, by bitterest misery bent."

" Take courage, nymph rever'd," the god replied,
" Far from thy bosom cast these cares aside,
" Would that were mine, the uncontroulable pow'r,
" To ward thy son from death's impending hour,
" As now such armour shall his limbs enfold,
" As, without wonder, none—no mortal shall behold."

He spake, and turn'd his bellows tow'rds the fire,
And bade them toil, and compass his desire,
And twice ten pair at once his call obey'd,
And the flames sparkled as the bellows play'd.
Now forcibly they roar'd, now softly blew,
As Vulcan will'd it, and the labour grew:
Now to the forge the god the metals bore,
Tin, brass, the costly gold, and silver ore,
Fix'd the huge anvil on its massy stand,
And subtly turn'd the tongs, or work'd the hammering hand.

He first a vast and massive buckler made,
There all the wonders of his work display'd:

With silver belt adorn'd, and triply wound
Orb within orb the border beaming round.
Five plates compos'd the shield: there Vulcan's art
Charg'd with his skilful mind each varied part.
There earth, there heav'n appear'd, there ocean flow'd,
There the orb'd moon, and sun unwearied glow'd,
There ev'ry star that gems the brow of night,
Pleiads, and Hyads, and Orion's might,
The Bear, that, watchful in his ceaseless roll
Around the star whose light illumes the Pole,
Still eyes Orion, nor ere stoops to lave
His beams unconscious of the ocean wave.

There, by the god's creative pow'r reveal'd,
Two stately cities fill'd with life the shield.
Here nuptials, solemn feasts, and pomps that led
Brides from their chambers to the nuptial bed.
Bright blaz'd the torches as they swept along
Thro' streets that rung with hymeneal song:
And while gay youths, swift circling round and round,
Danc'd to the pipe and harp's harmonious sound,
The women throng'd, and, wondering as they view'd,
Stood in each portal, and the pomp pursu'd.

Next, on the shield, a forum met the view;
Two men contending, there a concourse drew:

A citizen was slain: keen rose the strife:
'Twas compensation claim'd for loss of life.
This swore the mulct for blood was strictly paid;
This, that the fine long due was yet delay'd:
Both claim'd th' award, and bad the laws decide,
And partial numbers stood at either side,
With eager clamours for decision call,
Till the fear'd heralds seat and silence all.
There the hoar elders, in their sacred place,
On seats of polish'd stone the circle grace;
Rise with a herald's sceptre, weigh the cause,
And speak in turn the sentence of the laws:
While in the midst, for him to bear away
Who rightliest spoke, two golden talents lay.

The other city on the shield display'd
Two hosts that girt it, in bright mail array'd.
Diverse their counsel: these, to burn, decide,
And those to seize, and all its wealth divide.
The town their summons scorn'd, resistance dar'd,
And secretly for ambush arms prepar'd.
Wife, grandsire, child, one soul alike in all,
Stand on the battlements, and guard the wall.
Mars, Pallas led their host: gold either god,
A golden radiance from their armour flow'd:

Celestial beauty grac'd, and o'er the rest
A god-like grandeur crown'd their tow'ring crest.
Onward they past, till, where a river wound,
A station fit for ambush mark'd the ground,
A watering place for beasts of every kind,
And there they couch'd beneath their arms reclin'd.
Two spies, at distance from their comrades, lay,
And watch'd the cattle on their wonted way.
They come;—unconscious of the ambuscade,
Two shepherds, following, on their reed-pipes play'd.
Warn'd by their spies, the warriors seize the prey,
Drive the horn'd beasts and snowy flocks away,
And slay the swains. As loud the tumult rose
Of bellowing oxen, and conflicting blows,
The chiefs from council dart; with fiery speed
Mount, lash their coursers, pour upon the mead,
And, warring on the margin of the flood,
The spear-arm'd foe-men shed each other's blood.
Mid these Contention rush'd, wild Tumult rag'd,
And ruthless Fate unsparing battle wag'd,
Grasp'd one new-wounded, one without a wound,
And drew another slain along the ground:
While the dank garments that the warriors wore
Clung to their shoulders, thick with human gore.
Like life the conflict clash'd, the battle bled,
And host immixt with host dragg'd forth by turn the dead.

The god then wrought on that celestial shield
A broad, a triple-plough'd, and fertile field;
There many ploughmen, bending o'er their toil,
Turn'd to and fro their yokes, and clave the soil;
And, as they reach'd the confine of the plain,
And paus'd to breathe ere turning back again,
The master met them, and to every hind
A goblet fill'd with luscious wine assign'd;
Then, each his furrow labouring, clave the ground,
And strove to reach the glebe's extremest bound:
And the tilth darken'd like a new turn'd clod,
Tho' golden all: all wonder of the god.

Now, laden deep with corn, a heavy field
Rose on the view, and bristled o'er the shield.
The reapers toil'd, the sickles in their hand,
Heap after heap fell thick along the land;
Three labourers grasp them, and in sheaves upbind;
Boys, gathering up their handfuls, went behind,
Proffering their load: mid these, in gladsome mood,
Mute, leaning on his staff, the master stood.
Apart, the heralds, in an oaken glade,
Slew a huge bullock, and the banquet made,
While women, busy with the wheaten grain,
Kneaded the meal to feast at eve the swain.

Now, bow'd with grapes, in gold a vineyard glow'd,
A purple light along its clusters flow'd:
On poles of silver train'd the vines repos'd,
Dark the deep trench, and pales of tin enclos'd.
One path alone there led, along whose way
Ceas'd not the gatherers thro' the live-long day:
Youths and fair girls, who, gladdening in the toil,
In woven panniers bore the nectar spoil:
In midst a boy, who o'er the silver wire
Breath'd the sweet sounds that trill'd along the lyre;
While the gay chorus, as they danc'd along,
Together struck the ground, and swell'd the song.

Now a large herd, high-horn'd, part tin, part gold,
Rose from the buckler of celestial mould:
These from their stalls rush'd bellowing to the meads,
Where flow'd a river midst o'ershadowing reeds:
Four herdsmen follow'd, all in gold design'd,
And nine fleet-footed dogs came on behind.
Two famish'd lions, prowling for their prey,
Sprung on the bull that foremost led the way,
And wild with pain their bellowing victim drew,
While on their tract the dogs and herdsmen flew:
Thro' the rent hide their food the lions tore,
The fuming entrails gorg'd, and drain'd his gore,

In vain the herdsmen speed, and urge in vain
The dogs the lions' conflict to sustain;
Too weak to wound, they linger'd, half-dismay'd,
Yet stood, too bold to fly, and fiercely bay'd.

Now the god's changeful artifice display'd
Fair flocks at pasture in a lovely glade:
And folds, and sheltering stalls peep'd up between,
And shepherd huts diversified the scene.

Now on the shield a choir appear'd to move,
Whose flying feet the tuneful labyrinth wove;
Such as fam'd Dædalus, on Gnossus' shore,
For bright-hair'd Ariadne form'd of yore.
Youths and fair girls, there hand in hand advanc'd,
Tim'd to the song their step, and gaily danc'd.
Round every maid light robes of linen flow'd,
Round every youth a glossy tunic glow'd;
Those wreath'd with flowers, while from their partners hung
Swords that all gold from belts of silver swung.
Train'd by nice art each flexile limb to wind,
Their twinkling feet the measur'd maze entwin'd,
Fleet as the wheel whose use the potter tries
When twirl'd beneath his hand its axle flies.

Now all at once their graceful ranks combine,
Each rang'd against the other, line with line.
The crowd flock'd round, and, wond'ring as they view'd,
Thro' every change the varying dance pursu'd;
The while two tumblers, as they led the song,
Turn'd in the midst, and roll'd themselves along.

There, last, the god the force of ocean bound,
And pour'd its waves the buckler's orb around.

The shield's vast bulk thus wrought, the Fire-God fram'd
A breastplate that in brightness fire outflam'd:
Then, a huge helm with various art imprest,
And tow'ring on its strength a golden crest;
Last, greaves of ductile tin. These, all complete,
The fire-god brought, and laid at Thetis' feet:
She, like a falcon, from Olympus' height,
Flew with the arms that blaz'd around her flight.

THE NINETEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Thetis brings the armour to her son.—The reconciliation of Agamemnon and Achilles.—Briseis' lamentation over the body of Patroclus.—Achilles arms for battle, and leads forth his Myrmidons.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XIX.

Morn, saffron-rob'd, from Ocean's flowing stream,
O'er gods and men brought back day's dawning beam,
When Thetis, bearer of the gift of God,
Came down where, nigh his fleet, her son abode:
And found him, mid his warriors woe-opprest,
Bow'd in deep anguish o'er Patroclus' breast.
Close at his side the goddess took her stand,
And, thus addressing, fondly clasp'd his hand:

"My son, tho' griev'd, here leave Patroclus' corse,
"Slain by the will of heav'n, and heavenly force.
"Take thou these beauteous arms, by Vulcan made,
"Such as in war no warrior e'er array'd."

She spake: and laid the arms his feet before,
And loud and long burst up their brazen roar:

Fear fell on all: none, none, tho' bold in fight,
Dar'd on the gift celestial fix his sight.
But when Achilles saw them, flaming ire
Flash'd from his eyelids like a stream of fire:
Firmly he grasp'd them, and with grim delight,
Felt, as he grasp'd, unconquerable might.

Then thus exclaim'd: "These arms, by Vulcan giv'n,
" These are no work of man, but worthy heav'n.
" Now will I brace them on: yet sore I fear,
" While lov'd Menœtius' son lies breathless here,
" Lest thro' the wounds, the flies' innumerous race
" Pierce, and, engendering worms the corse disgrace:
" The spirit, life of life, for ever fled,
" Corruption quickly taints, and wastes the dead."

" Here be at peace"—the sea-nymph swift replied—
" Cast from thy mind, my son, such cares aside;
" I, when the swarms on wing here seek their prey,
" Will drive these feasters on the slain away.
" While here the body rests, twelve months past o'er,
" Fresh it remains, yea, fresher than before.
" But thou to council all the heroes bring,
" And there renounce thy rage against the king:
" In heaven's bright panoply then rush on fight,
" And gird thee in the glory of thy might."

Each word the goddess spoke, the hero fir'd,
And more than mortal fortitude inspir'd:
Then in Patroclus' nostrils Thetis pour'd
Drops, whose ambrosial scent from taint the dead secur'd.

Pelides, shouting, past along the strand,
And rous'd the chiefs that flock'd at his command.
All, who once wont to tarry mid the fleet,
All at the helm who held their steadfast seat,
And all who minister'd, and dol'd the food,
A countless throng around the council stood:
For Peleus' son, so long estrang'd from fight,
Mail'd in bright arms had past before their sight.
Two glorious chiefs, tho' lame, before the rest,
Ulysses and Tydides, onward prest:
Propt on their spears they foremost reach'd the ground,
And half forgot, when danger prest, the wound:
Pierc'd by the brazen spear, by Coon lanc'd,
Last to the councils Atreus' son advanc'd:
And now when all were met, and still each tongue,
Achilles rising spake the chiefs among:

" Better for us, Atrides, better far,
" Had we thus met, than in contentious war,

" When thou and I, our hearts consum'd with ire,
" For the contested girl lanch'd words of fire:
" Better, had Dian pierc'd the girl that day
" I chose her, when in dust Lyrnessus lay,
" Than that such heroes should have bit the plain,
" When vengeance bade me from just war abstain.
" To Hector glory: but to suffering Greece,
" Remembrance of our strife not soon shall cease.
" The past let pass. Tho' griev'd, in either breast
" Be anger by necessity supprest.
" I curb my wrath: ill suits Achilles' soul,
" Perpetual ire, and rage without controul.
" Thou, as befits thee, now no more delay,
" But rouse thy forces mailed in war array:
" Where I myself, before the Trojan host,
" Will prove if sweet their slumber on our coast.
" Yet will that knee most gladly rest, whose flight
" Escapes the lance hurl'd by Pelides' might."

He spake: and every heart lost joy renew'd
That Peleus' son had thus his rage subdu'd;
Then, on his seat, not rising mid the ring,
At once with swift reply thus spake the king:

" Friends, heroes, ministers of Mavors, hear:
" Who e'er to speak arises, claims your ear:

" Him interrupt not—difficult, at large,
" Tho' skill'd the lip, that office to discharge.
" Mid the dense crowd, how hear? how speak? The tongue,
" Tho' powerful, fails the multitude among.
" To Peleus' son I turn: ye, all, attend,
" And to the word I speak observance lend.
" Oft time has Grecia wont her king upbraid,
" Oft on my brow unjust reproaches laid:
" Yet am not I the cause, but Jove, but Fate,
" And dark Erynnis' unrelenting hate:
" These, with their fury, swell'd my soul that day,
" When rash I forc'd Achilles' prize away.
" What could I do? how heaven's decree remove?
" How Ate's awful pow'r, stern child of Jove?
" She, whose soft foot ne'er deigns descend on earth,
" But passes o'er each head of human birth:
" She, who distils her venom in the mind,
" And weaves the treacherous net that chains mankind.
" She, who once injur'd Jove, whose sov'reign sway
" The gods in heav'n and men on earth obey.
" Yet him, shrewd Juno, vers'd in Ate's wile,
" The female goddess could the god beguile:
" When, in proud Thebes, Alcmena's labour strife
" Toil'd, as th' Herculean burden long'd for life.

" Then Jove exultant spake: ' Celestials! hear!
" ' Ye all, each god and goddess bow the ear!
" ' Hear what my spirit prompts: to me this morn
" ' Shall Ilithya view a hero born:
" ' Who, o'er all realms around, shall rule the race,
" ' All who their lineage boast from Jove's embrace.'"

" Then Juno fraudful spake: ' We all have heard,
" ' But ne'er shall Jove redeem his boastful word,
" ' Yet—by thy oath, the terror on thy brow,
" ' Swear that the realms around to him shall bow,
" ' Him, who this day shall, born of woman, trace
" ' His heav'nly origin from Jove's embrace.' "

" Then, reckless of her guile, th' Olympian swore,
" And that tremendous oath but wrong'd him more.
" Then Juno darting from Olympus' height,
" Swift in Achaian Argos stay'd her flight:
" She knew that Sthenelus' illustrious bride,
" To Jove-born Perseus close in blood ally'd,
" There pregnant dwelt: and there her heav'nly might
" Brought, ere the time, a seven-month'd babe to light:
" And stay'd Lucina from Alcmena's throes:
" Then heralding the birth to heav'n uprose."

" ' Sire, lord of thunder, hear: a man this morn,
" ' He who shall rule o'er Argos now is born:
" ' Eurystheus, son of Sthenelus, thy race
" ' From Perseus sprung: that king shall Argos grace.'"

" She spake: then deeply griev'd, with arm outspread,
" Jove grasp'd the baleful Ate's bright-hair'd head:
" And stung with fury, by his terror swore,
" That ne'er her foot should tread Olympus more,
" Ne'er the curst fiend, who injur'd all, again
" Should, back returning, haunt his starr'd domain."

" He spake: and hurl'd her from the star-pav'd sky,
" To dwell eternal mid mortality.
" There ever loath'd her, when th' Herculean birth,
" His son, beneath Eurystheus slav'd on earth.
" Not otherwise I felt, when late I view'd
" Our bleeding host by Hector here pursu'd.
" I wrong'd thee, I forget not, rashly blind:
" Jove quench'd the light of reason in my mind.
" Yet would I fain thy enmity allay,
" And with unnumber'd gifts that wrong repay.
" Guardian of Greece! again, mid war alarms,
" Go in thy strength, and rouse the rest in arms.

" All that Ulysses promis'd yesternight,
" So thou consent, shall thy consent requite.
" Yet—tho' thy spirit glow the war to wage,
" Curb, if thou will, awhile thy noble rage:
" Stay, till my train, returning from the fleet,
" Lay the rich recompense before thy feet."

" King, far-renown'd,"—he cried,—" 'tis wholly thine
" To grant or to refuse: war, vengeance, mine:
" Waste not in words the hours that action need,
" Yet unconsummated the mighty deed.'
" Greece must behold Achilles' lance once more,
" Mid Troy's slain phalanxes reek bath'd in gore:
" Each, at my call, advance—no more delay,
" And, as ye mark my deeds, so trace my way."

" Thou god-like hero,"—wise Ulysses cried,—
" Brave as thou art, not thus the battle guide:
" Not unrefresh'd, not thus worn-out with fight,
" To Ilion's walls invading Greece excite.
" Not brief the war when hostile armies join,
" And a god breathes in each embattled line.
" Bid in their tents our host at feast remain,
" And their lost strength with food and wine regain.

" None, from the dawn to day's decreasing light,
" Can without food endure th' unceasing fight:
" Tho' bold his heart, tho' not a fear assail,
" Yet more and more the limbs enfeebled fail.
" Fell thirst and famine sore distress create,
" And the knees sink beneath their wonted weight.
" But saturate with food, and cheer'd by wine,
" None shall from morn till eve the war decline:
" Nor with firm limbs untir'd, and fearless heart,
" E'er feel fatigue till all his foes depart.
" Now, free the host, bid all their food prepare,
" And revelling in peace the banquet share.
" The king himself before the public sight
" Shall spread his gifts, and yield thy soul delight:
" The king himself, amid the Argives, swear
" His arms had never clasp'd the captive fair.
" So be thou sooth'd.—Then, grac'd with festive rite,
" Thee to his tent Atrides shall invite,
" At the rich banquet friendship's vow renew,
" And give to honour honour's utmost due.
" Thou too, O king! by this example taught,
" More just to others, moderate thy thought,
" Nor deem it base for monarchs to assuage
" The man they injured by intemperate rage."

" Me much thy words" — the king replied, —
" delight:
" Guide of my course, thou lead'st my steps aright.
" My oath shall witness that I all approve,
" Nor e'er will falsify words pledg'd to Jove.
" Here wait, Achilles, tho' to war inclin'd,
" Here wait our gather'd host, awhile resign'd,
" Wait till my presents glad the public view,
" And oaths, that bind the soul, our faith renew.
" But thou, Ulysses! choose, — this charge be thine —
" The noblest youths of all Achaia's line:
" Then every gift, and every blooming fair,
" All that I promis'd, to Pelides bear:
" And from the camp a boar, Talthybius, bring,
" An offering to the sun, and heaven's supernal king."

" Not now, king far-renown'd" — Achilles said —
" At fitter season to the feast persuade,
" When pause from fight permits a happier hour,
" And hate and fury less my soul o'erpow'r.
" There, there they lie, by Jove-arm'd Hector slain,
" Their blood for vengeance cries from yonder plain.
" You urge them to the banquet, better far
" Yet hungry, yet unfed, I urge to war.
" Fain would I bid them, at the set of sun,
" Spread the wide feast, the work of slaughter done.

" Till then, nor drink, nor food shall greet me more,
" While lov'd Patroclus lies my sight before—
" Lies in my tent, spear-gor'd, by all discern'd,
" His feet unburied tow'rds the portal turn'd—
" Lies, wept by all—my banquet, blood and death,
" Groans, and the rattle of life's latest breath."

" Achilles, Peleus' son"—Ulysses cried—
" Thou bravest of the brave—our battle-guide—
" Far beyond mine, thy lance deals death around,
" Yet in my words maturer wisdom found;
" Age and experience cull the fruits of thought,
" Then be Pelides by Ulysses taught.
" Satiate with war, soon sinks the arm to earth,
" When the sword strows like straw the human birth,
" And scant the harvest, and the gleaner fails,
" When Jove, that guides the battle, turns the scales.
" Let not sore famine o'er the lifeless weep:
" Day after day they fall a countless heap.
" What pause from grief?—our's, to inhume the dead,
" And calmly drop the tear that's daily shed.
" Who 'scape the slaughter, theirs the after-care
" With food and drink their vigour to repair,
" That every limb, in brazen mail array'd,
" May firmer strive, and battle undismay'd.

" But let no Grecian here now idly stand,
" None, back receding, wait a fresh command,
" 'Tis death to him, who lingers in the fleet.
" Arm all, and high in heart, Troy's fiercest battle meet."

He spake: and choosing Nestor's either son,
Meges, and Thoas, and bold Merion,
And Lycomede, and Menalippus, went
To bring the presents from Atrides' tent.
They went, nor long delay'd—the chieftains bore
All that the king had promised o'er and o'er:
Sev'n tripods, twice ten cauldrons, twelve proud steeds,
Whose race in strength and speed the rest exceeds,
Sev'n maids, whose talents with their beauty vied,
The eighth, Briseis, in her blooming pride.
Ulysses brought ten golden talents weigh'd,
Achaia's youths the other gifts display'd,
In order placed before th' admiring throng,
Where Agamemnon rose the chiefs among,
And fam'd Talthybius, leading on the boar,
The hallow'd victim, stood the king before—
The king the dagger drew, that lightly play'd
By the broad scabbard of his battle-blade,
The bristly forelock cut, devote to Jove,
And rais'd, in act to pray, his arms above,

While all, as fit, in solemn silence heard
Their king, who heav'nward gaz'd, and spake the word:

" God of the gods, o'er all, thou first, thou best,
" Hear, while I thus thy deity attest,
" Earth, and thou sun, and ye this world below,
" Furies, avengers of the faithless vow,
" Witness, that ne'er, by pride or love betray'd,
" This hand, with touch unhallow'd, wrong'd the maid:
" Safe in the shelter of my tent, unstain'd,
" In chaste security the fair remain'd.
" If false my oath, on this devoted head
" Pour each dire curse, and strike the perjurer dead."

He spake: and in his throat deep pierc'd the boar:
Then, as the victim weltered in his gore,
Talthybius whirl'd him to the azure flood,
And to the scaly myriads cast for food.

Then—thus Achilles; " Jove! thou, thou the cause,
" Thy will on man's doom'd race destruction draws,
" Else ne'er had Atreus' son my rage defied,
" Nor from these arms reluctant forc'd my bride—
" Jove, 'twas thy will that Greece on Phrygia's plain
" Should mourn o'er many a chief, untimely slain.

" Ye—now to banquet; then, recruited, speed
" Where back to battle I the warriors lead."

The council rose—all at his bidding went:
Each to th' enjoyment of his separate tent,
While his brave warriors, that the presents bore,
Rang'd in Achilles' tents the guarded store,
Beneath his roof the beauteous captives led,
And drove the coursers where his cattle fed—
But when Briseis, lovely as the light,
Like golden Venus, beaming on the sight,
Saw with death-wounds Patroclus deeply gor'd,
She clasp'd his corse, and loud and long deplor'd,
Tore her fair face, smooth neck, and snowy breast,
And steep'd in tears, thus tenderly address:

" Dear to my soul, Patroclus! most belov'd!
" When from this tent I past, by force remov'd,
" I left thee living, but at my return,
" Oh woe on woe! thee lifeless I discern—
" The youth my parents destin'd for these arms,
" The plighted wooer of Briseis' charms,
" I saw him, where my brave defender lay
" Beneath the bulwarks, breathing life away:
" Three brethren, whom my tender mother bore,
" Fell in one fatal day, to rise no more.

" Yet—when Achilles had that wooer slain,
" And Myne's tow'rs lay prostrate on the plain,
" Thou would'st not that I wept, thy soothing soul
" Would with Achilles' love my woe controul:
" Thou would'st thyself Pelides' navy guide,
" And me to Phthia lead his virgin bride,
" There mid his chiefs the nuptial banquet spread—
" Therefore, mild, gentle friend, I weep thee dead."

She spake: the women answering groan with groan,
Seem'd to lament his fate, but mourn'd their own.
The while the chiefs in vain their pray'r renew'd,
And to the Son of Peleus proffer'd food.

" If yet"—he cried—" a friend Pelides hear,
" Vex not with such vain pray'rs my wearied ear;
" Deep misery drinks my blood: till close of day
" No food shall tempt, no drink my thirst allay."

Forth, at his word, then many a chieftain went,
Yet still the Atridæ linger'd in his tent,
There Nestor, Crete's brave king, there Phœnix staid,
And sage Ulysses long his step delay'd:
All strove to soothe the tempest in his breast,
But no kind soothing still'd the storm to rest:

Fierce war alone could yield his soul repose,
And fond remembrance lingering o'er his woes:

" Time was that thou, most lov'd, most hapless friend,
" Would'st in the tent thyself on me attend:
" Thy proffering hand would press on me the food,
" When Greece prepar'd to drain Troy's hostile blood.
" Now, there thou liest, thus pierc'd, before my sight:
" Vain now the feast,—it yields no more delight,
" Depriv'd of thee—how?—with what bitterer woe,
" Than thus to view thee, can my heart o'erflow?
" Not if I heard that death had seiz'd my sire,
" Whom, now, for such a son, intense desire
" Wastes, fondly weeping, while from Pthia far
" That son for hateful Helen wages war:
" Not if I heard my boy had ceas'd to live,
" If yet in Scyros rear'd, that son survive.
" Ah! once I fed the hope, that I alone
" On Phrygia's fated plain, mid hosts o'erthrown,
" Should perish far from Argos' lov'd domain;
" But that thy foot should Pthia's realm regain:
" And thou from Scyros sailing proudly home,
" Would'st lead my son to my ancestral dome,
" And all my wealth display, my slaves, my store,
" And the proud palace of his sires of yore.

" For Peleus now has left the light of day,
" Or, bow'd with weight of years, weeps life away,
" His son's dire fate expecting to deplore,
" And hear the word, ' Achilles is no more.' "

He weeping spake: they too, each weeping chief,
Thought on their distant home, and groan'd in grief.

Jove saw their woe, and to the blue-ey'd Maid,
Compassioning their sorrow, kindly said,

" Turn'st thou for ever from that virtuous chief,
" Finds Peleus' son in Pallas no relief?
" Lo! where the mourner lies the fleet before:
" Hark how those heart-felt groans his friend deplore.
" For other chiefs behold the banquet spread,
" But Peleus' son still fasting, still unfed—
" Speed, in his breast heaven's nectar-dews instill,
" Lest Famine fail, nor war's dire work fulfil."

Each word Jove spake inflam'd Minerva's mind,
By previous zeal to Grecia's aid inclin'd—
Like a shrill harpy, stretch'd on wing for flight,
The goddess darted thro' th' ethereal light.
Greece stood in arms, when Jove's celestial maid
With willing zeal her sire's command obey'd,

And, lest their chief should fail beneath the strife,
Pour'd in his breast the nectar, stor'd with life;
Then to Jove's starry realm return'd again,
While from the fleet Greece gather'd on the plain.
As flakes on flakes, thick falling, nature veil,
When the clear north-wind arms with ice the gale,
Thus dense, the dazzling helms, the hawberks blaz'd,
Boss'd shields, and lances to the sun uprais'd:
The flash beam'd up to heaven's illumin'd height,
And all the earth resplendent laugh'd in light,
And the wide plain with march of myriads reel'd,
While grim Pelides arm'd him for the field—
His teeth loud gnash'd, and thro' intense desire
Stream'd from his eyes, like flame, the living fire,—
Grief gnaw'd his soul, that mad for vengeance glow'd,
While on his limbs he clasp'd the armour of the god.—

First round his legs the greaves Achilles brac'd,
With radiant clasps of silver ore enchas'd:
Then on his breadth of breast the hawberk hung,
Then his huge sword athwart his shoulders swung:
Last, seiz'd the bulk and burden of his shield,
That like the full-orb'd moon illum'd afar the field—
As when along the ocean streams a light,
Fed by lone shepherds on the mountain height,
Beheld of those, who cleave, where tempests sweep,
Far from their friends, unwillingly the deep:

Thus from that beauteous shield's celestial frame,
Shot up to heaven's high vault its dazzling flame.
Then, raising up its weight, Achilles plac'd
On his brave brow the casque by Vulcan grac'd.
The bushy helmet like a beauteous star
Shone, and a light around it stream'd afar,
That from the fullness of the golden hair
Wav'd, floating o'er the crest, and fir'd the air.
Then Peleus' glorying son his arms essay'd,
If fit, and free for battle-action made:
And as he tried them, moving in his might,
They lifted up his limbs, like wings on flight.
Then from the case, wherein its terror lay,
The chief brought forth his father's lance to-day,
Vast, weighty, strong, which, never warrior, none
Could vibrate, save th' Achillean arm alone;
The Pelian lance, the ash that Chiron gave,
From Pelion's summit hewn to slay the brave.
Automedon, and Alcimus prepar'd
To yoke the coursers, and the labour shar'd,
Bitted their champing mouths, and aptly join'd
To the firm seat the reins that stretch'd behind.
Automedon, swift springing in the car,
Seiz'd the bright scourge that lash'd their speed in war,
While, near him, in the panoply of God,
Bright as the noontide sun, Achilles rode,

And with fierce shout, stern-bending o'er the yoke,
To his paternal steeds thus harshly spoke.

" Xanthus and Balius, fam'd Podarge's breed,
" When tir'd with slaughter I from war recede,
" Bear me in safety to my host again,
" Nor leave me there, leave like Patroclus, slain."

Then, grac'd by Juno with articulate breath,
Thus Xanthus answering spake, the yoke beneath,
While, as he downward hung, his stream of mane,
In full luxuriance floating, swept the plain:

" Stern Son of Peleus, here thy steeds again
" Shall bear thee safely from the battle-plain:
" But o'er thee death impends: the guilt not ours:
" Heav'n wills it, and harsh fate, that all o'erpow'rs.
" Not through our sloth, when slain Patroclus lay,
" Th' exulting Trojans bore his arms away:
" But him the god, who from Latona came,
" Slew in the van to crown th' Hectorean fame.
" We, in the race could match the viewless wind,
" And leave the fleetest, Zephyrus, far behind.
" But thou to fate must yield: thy doom's decreed:
" Slain by a god and man I see thee bleed."

The Furies then his voice prophetic staid,
And thus in scornful wrath Achilles said:

" Ill it beseems thee—why predict my death?
" Here—'tis decreed—shall close Pelides' breath,
" From my lov'd sire, from Thetis, absent far,
" Yet Troy shall, ere I die, be gorg'd with war:"
Then fiercely shouting to the armed train,
Dash'd thro' the van, and gain'd the battle-plain.

THE TWENTIETH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

The gods, oppos'd to each other, descend to battle.—The combat of Achilles and Æneas.—Achilles slaughters the Trojans.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XX.

Round Peleus' son, insatiable in fight,
Thus, at the fleet, Greece stood in mailed might;
Troy arm'd her strength, and ranging band by band,
Fix'd on the vantage height her battle stand:
Then Jove bad Themis summon every god
To solemn council in his high abode.
O'er the wide world the unwearied goddess flew,
And to Jove's starry dome the synod drew:
None—save Oceanus—no river-god,
Or nymph that on the grassy meadow trod,
Or made her haunt beneath th' embow'ring shade,
Or ceaseless fed the fresh springs, disobey'd.
All met, and each upon his pillar'd throne
Sat, forg'd by Vulcan's art for Jove alone.
With these the Ocean-Monarch from the main
Came at her call, and join'd the heav'nly train;

And thus inquir'd, " Why, thunder-wielding Jove,
" This council summon'd in the realms above ?
" Thee doth the doom of Troy or Greece concern,
" While now the gathering flames of battle burn ?"

" Not unto thee"—Jove answer'd—" not unknown
" Why thus the gods in council gird my throne.
" Tho' doom'd to perish, yet these mortals move
" The care and deep solicitude of Jove.
" I, in Olympus, on my throne reclin'd,
" Will, gazing on the scene, indulge my mind :
" Ye—join the armies—each, as suits his will,
" Aid either host, and all his wish fulfil—
" If singly arm'd 'gainst Ilion's leagued band,
" None could Pelides' matchless pow'r withstand.
" What—if ere now that hero's distant sight
" Has fill'd their war array with wild affright,
" Now, fir'd to madness by Patroclus' fall,
" Troy crush'd beneath him, would untimely fall."

He spake : and swell'd the war—with madden'd mind
Forth sped the immortals, diversely inclin'd.
Juno, Minerva, and the god whose reign
Sways, compassing the world, the boundless main,
And Hermes, glorious for inventive thought
And useful arts, the Grecian navy sought.

With them, his eyes fierce rolling, Vulcan went,
Slow halting, while his lame limbs feebly bent.
But Mars, whose helmet's crest high tower'd in air,
But Phœbus, waving wide his unshorn hair,
Latona, Xanthus, and Love's laughing dame,
With quiver'd Dian, to the Trojans came.
Ere yet the gods alighted, high the boast
And daring ardour of Achaia's host,
Fir'd by Pelides, who, long strange to fight,
All radiant tower'd in arms before their sight.
But dreadful the foreboding that imprest
Unwonted terror on each Trojan breast,
While now they view'd in arms, that blaz'd afar,
Achilles tow'ring like the God of War.
But when the gods, descended mid mankind,
Discord, whose step is death, the battle join'd.
And, now, as Pallas stood beyond the wall
On the deep fosse, her spirit-stirring call
Was heard afar, and, now, th' embolden'd host
Heard her in thunder on the wave-lash'd coast.
And, now, a shouting, like a whirlwind swept,
As Mars on Troy's high tow'r his station kept,
And now nigh distant Simois, when the god
On the green brow of fair Colone trod.
Thus, opposite, the gods with gods enrag'd,
Rush'd, as th' encount'ring armies battle wag'd.

Jove hurl'd dense thunders down, with shattering blow
Grim Neptune rock'd the boundless earth below:
The mountains bow'd, and all the roots of Ide,
Troy, and the Grecian fleet, reel'd far and wide.—
Th' infernal monarch, mid his realms unknown,
Loud cried, and sprung in terror from his throne,
Lest Neptune, cleaving earth, to men and gods
Should spread to view hell's dark and drear abodes,
Of gods themselves abhorr'd—so dreadful rose
The shock of war when gods the gods oppose.
Against the Ocean-King, Apollo stood,
Bearing his fleet-wing'd arrows, barb'd for blood:
Minerva Mars oppos'd: 'gainst Juno came
Gold-shafted Dian, goddess of the game.
Hermes, inventor of each useful art,
Against Latona took a warrior's part:
And the vast river, whom gods Xanthus name,
But men Scamander, met the lord of flame.—
Thus gods the gods withstood—but Peleus' son
'Gainst Hector, breathing death, rush'd grimly on,
'Gainst him his spirit yearn'd, and more and more
Madden'd to sate fell Mavors with his gore.
But Phœbus, breathing in Æneas' breast
A force, that with Pelides dar'd contest,
His voice, like Priam's son, Lycaon, fram'd,
While thus to Troy's brave chief the god exclaim'd:

" Where now thy threats, thy banquet boastings flown,
" That thou Pelides' wrath dar'dst front alone ?"

" Why thus"—Æneas answer'd—" me command,
" Me loth to meet that hero's matchless hand ?
" Not now I first shall front him :—once I fled,
" Chas'd by his spear, from Ida's pasturing bed,
" When the invader, where our cattle graz'd,
" Sack'd Pedasus, and rich Lyrnessus raz'd :—
" At that dread moment the preserver, Jove,
" Bad my light limbs with heav'nly fleetness move,
" Else I had sunk beneath Achilles' spear,
" And Pallas, guardian of his war-career,
" Who led him on, and lighting up his way,
" Bad him the Leleges and Trojans slay.
" In vain against Achilles man contends,
" While evermore a present god defends—
" Straight from his arm th' inevitable dart
" Flies, nor ere rests till centred in the heart :
" Yet would a god now poise war's equal scales,
" Not,—tho' all brass, his force o'er mine prevails."

" Hero ! with fervent pray'r"—Apollo spoke—
" Now to thy aid heaven's guardian pow'r invoke.

" Thou can'st—'tis said—thy birth from Venus trace :
" He, from a goddess of inferior race.
" Thy mother sprung from Jove's celestial blood,
" His, from the age-bow'd dweller of the flood.
" Right onward bear thy javelin : cast off fear :
" Nor let fierce words, or threats curb thy career."

Each word with dauntless courage fir'd his breast,
As thro' the van the bright-mail'd hero prest;—
But Juno, when she view'd Anchises' son,
Against Pelides rushing furious on,
Summon'd the gods : " Ye, both,"—the goddess said,
" Thou, Ocean's Lord, and thou, Jove's martial maid!
" Weigh well th' event : in burnish'd brass array'd
" Yon chief Pelides fronts, by Phœbus' aid.
" Come—force him back :—or some celestial pow'r
" Aid Peleus' son at this decisive hour,
" Stand at his side, unearthly strength impart,
" And breathe our spirit in the hero's heart.
" That chief shall know, to him the glory giv'n,
" The guardianship of gods most fear'd in heav'n,
" Know that the pow'rs, who once could Troy defend,
" With feeble force, compar'd with ours, contend.
" Hence we descended from th' Olympian height,
" And deign immingle in the press of fight,

" That Troy this day shall ne'er that chief o'erpow'r,
" Tho' doom'd to suffer in an after hour,
" When, what the Fates of future misery spun
" On his life-web, must fall on Thetis' son.—
" Haste—lest Pelides' self should feel a fear,
" If fail our voice embold'ning his career:
" For, when a god and man meet hand to hand,
" Shall man th' unveil'd Omnipotence withstand?"

" Juno"—thus spake the Monarch of the Main—
" The rage that ill beseems thee, queen, refrain.
" Strong tho' our arm, to their's superior far,
" Yet would I not commit the gods in war.
" Let us on yon far height in peace remain,
" While mortals clash, and strow with death the plain.
" But there if Mars or Phœbus first appear,
" Or check the slaughter of Pelides' spear,
" We, where the battle burns those gods around,
" Will swell the tumult, and their pride confound:
" Soon shall those mighty combatants retreat,
" And, forc'd by us, seek heaven's protecting seat."

Then, first, the way the dark-hair'd sea-god led
Where an earth-rampart rear'd aloft its head,
Alcides' mound, to him in hasty hour
Rais'd by the Trojans and Minerva's pow'r,

His refuge, when the monster of the main,
Chas'd from the strand, pursu'd him on the plain.
There Neptune and the gods in peace repos'd,
And in dense clouds their viewless forms inclos'd.
The other gods on fair Colone's height,
Round Mavors and Apollo lay in night:
There they consulting sat, their battle staid,
And tho' Jove urg'd to war, the war delay'd:—

But the whole plain with multitudes o'erflow'd,
Earth with the blaze of men and coursers glow'd,
And, as they rush'd, a roar from all the ground,
Crush'd by the march of myriads, burst around.—
Then, mid each van, two chiefs, before the rest,
The bravest, onward to fell combat prest,
Æneas and Achilles:—to and fro
Sway'd the huge helmet on Æneas' brow;
His shield illum'd his breast, and high uprais'd
His fiercely-brandish'd spear around him blaz'd.
But, on the other part, fam'd Peleus' son
Like a fell lion rush'd impetuous on,
Like a fell lion, when, on watch to slay,
The hamlet's gather'd dwellers front his way.
He, with defying scorn, the foremost views,
Stalks on, and leisurely his course pursues:
But if some swain in pride of youth advance,
And rashly wound him with audacious lance,

He writhes—wide opes his jaws, whence thickly hangs
The reeking foam that froths around his fangs,—
He roars revenge, nor ceases to assail
His flanks, loud-lash'd beneath his sweep of tail:
Then, fir'd to onset, while intensely glow
His eye's whirl'd balls, and glare upon the foe,
Springs onward in exuberance of ire
To glut his rage in slaughter, or expire:—
Thus, as Pelides Troy's mail'd chief discern'd,
In his swoln heart insatiate fury burn'd.
Now, on their near approach, Æneas heard
The haughty menace of Achilles' word:

" Æneas! why, yon army left behind,
" Thou stand'st defying me with dauntless mind?
" Hop'st thou that Troy, beneath thy sceptred sway,
" Will, like another Priam, thee obey,
" That Priam, if I fall beneath thy hand,
" Enthrone thee sov'reign with supreme command?
" Not mutable his mind,—to him remain
" Sons fit their father's glory to sustain.
" Hopest thou that Troy to thee large lands assign,
" Thine her gold plains, her purple vineyards thine,
" If thou o'erpow'r me?—yet—not light the deed—
" My lance—methinks—once gave thee wond'rous speed,—

" Or, hast thou quite forgôt that luckless day
" When from the herds I drove thee lone away,
" Chas'd thee fast flying from th' Idæan height,
" When thy fleet foot ne'er paus'd, or turn'd on flight,
" Ere far Lyrnessus' walls thy race delay'd,
" Walls I o'erthrew by Jove's and Pallas' aid,
" And from its spoils the beauteous captives led,
" While the gods guarded thy dishonour'd head.
" None—vain thy hope—will now from death defend:
" Swift to thy host, I warn thee, backward bend.
" Hence—ere death strike—in flight thy safety lies:
" By sufferings taught, e'en fools are wond'rous wise."

" Hope not by words, Pelides! in thy pride,
" Me like a child to quail"—the chief replied—
" I too, on thee, in like contemptuous strain
" Could hurl keen taunts, and words of deep disdain;—
" To both alike our birth, our parents known,
" Proclaim'd by other voices than our own:
" But I ne'er view'd the founders of thy line,
" Nor e'er hast thou, Achilles, look'd on mine.
" Thou, from fam'd Peleus boast'st,—'tis said—thy blood,
" Thy mother, Thetis, goddess of the flood:

" From great Anchises I my lineage trace,
" My mother, Venus, Jove's celestial race.
" Of these—'tis destin'd—one, this fatal day
" Mourns her lov'd son untimely reft away:
" For, from this spot, we ne'er shall part in peace,
" Ne'er shall our war in boyish railing cease.
" But—would'st thou learn—I willingly proclaim
" The glory of my race, long known to fame.
" The Thunderer, first, sole lord of heav'n and earth,
" Gave to the founder of Dardania birth:
" For ere throng'd Ilion rose, our early race
" At Ida's foot had fix'd their native place.
" Then Ericthonius, who in wealth excell'd
" All human kind, the Dardan sceptre held.
" His mares, three thousand, o'er the marshes stray'd,
" While their gay foals in wanton circles play'd:
" A god, of those enamour'd, chang'd his frame,
" And, like a dark-maned courser, Boreas came.
" They, duly pregnant from the heav'nly seed,
" Gave to the light twelve foals of matchless speed.
" These, when they bounded o'er the golden grain,
" Bow'd not the ear that bristled up the plain,
" Nor when they rac'd o'er ocean's glassy sweep,
" Brush'd the light foam that floated on the deep—
" From Ericthonius, Tros the sceptre sway'd,
" Whose rightful rule the sons of Troy obey'd.

" From Tros, Assaracus, and Ilus sprung,
" And fairest far, earth's fairest sons among,
" Young Ganymede! whom erst the gods above
" Bore, for his charms, to crown the cup of Jove.
" Laomedon arose from Ilus' bed,
" From good Laomedon five brothers bred,
" Tithonus, Clityus, Priam known afar,
" Lampus, and Hicetaon fear'd in war.
" From brave Assaracus, thron'd Capys came,
" Anchises thence, my sire, renown'd of fame:
" From Priam, Hector—such, from race to race,
" From sire to son the line I boldly trace:—
" But Jove, who all o'errules in heav'n and earth,
" Grants valor, or withholds from human birth.
" But why, like boys, when battle claims our force,
" Hold we, in war's mid van, such vain discourse?
" We may, at will, with taunts each other goad,
" That might a ship, an hundred-oar'd, o'erload.
" Most voluble the tongue, and here and there
" Words meet, yet fill not all the field of air.
" Such as we speak, we hear, and give and take
" As we ourselves the wordy battle make—
" But why thus wrangle—why our prattling tongue
" For altercation, like weak women, strung?
" Who, fiercely railing, in the streets engage,
" Bolt words, or true, or false, as wills their rage?

" But till thy spear my dauntless course delay,
" Weak all thy words to turn Æneas' way—
" No more.—Against each other now advance—
" And prove whose arm more strongly hurls the lance."

Then hurl'd his lance on that horrific shield
That with its loud vibrations fill'd the field.
But—with stretch'd arm Pelides forward held,
Not unalarm'd the orb that death repell'd:
Half fearful lest the spear's o'erpow'ring weight,
Hurl'd by Æneas, should transfix the plate.
Vain fear—forgetful that the gift of heav'n
Yields not, nor breaks by force of mortal riv'n.
Not then Æneas' lance the buckler broke,
The gold, the gift of God, repell'd the stroke.
Thro' two dense folds the lance fell entrance gain'd,
But three, to guard Achilles, yet remain'd.
The god five folds had o'er each other laid,
Two, forg'd of brass, of tin two inly made:
The centre gold, there, wrought by heavenly art,
Stood in the golden mail th' unmoving dart.
Achilles then his lance long-shadowing threw,
On the shield's utmost rim the weapon flew,
Where, thinnest spread, the brass the buckler bound,
And the bull's hide its thinnest circle wound:

Thro' these the Pelian ash resistless past,
And shrill the buckler rang beneath its cast.
Down shrunk Æneas, yet—tho' bow'd with fear,
Stretch'd forth the shield, while o'er him glanc'd the spear
That either circle of the buckler broke,
Then stood in earth deep loosen'd by the stroke.
Dense horror on his quivering eye-lid stood,
At sight of that near lance which sought his blood.
Then, as Achilles, fiercely shouting, flew,
And the broad terror of his blade outdrew,
Æneas—where a rock's huge fragment lay,
Such as not two, in our degenerate day,
Could raise—uplifting easily alone,
Grasp'd with firm hand the burden of the stone,
And now had crush'd Pelides' tow'ring crest,
Or the orb'd shield that barr'd from death his breast:
Thou too, Pelides! with resistless blade,
Hadst at thy foot Æneas breathless laid,
But, swift preventive of each death-fraught stroke,
Thus the Sea Monarch to the Immortals spoke:

" Gods! o'er yon scene with grief of heart I bend,
" Lest great Æneas to the grave descend,
" Who, urg'd by Phœbus, fatally obey'd
" The counsel of a god who fails to aid.

" But—wherefore on this hero's blameless head,
" Woe due to others thus unjustly shed?
" His gifts have never ceas'd: in heaven's abode
" His sacred feasts have gratified each god.
" Ours to preserve him, lest Jove, swoln with ire,
" View him beneath Pelides now expire.
" He must not perish, lest, swept off from earth,
" All that once claim'd of Dardanus their birth,
" The king, whom Jove of all his heav'nly race
" Of women born, once deign'd supremely grace.
" Long since th' Olympian sire with hateful scorn
" Has look'd upon the race of Priam born.
" Troy now shall view Æneas thron'd in pow'r,
" And his son's sons there reign till time's remotest hour."

" Thou, that canst rock the globe"—stern Juno cried—
" Thou, in thy mind deliberate, and decide,
" Whether from Peleus' son thy wish to save
" That virtuous chief, or leave him to the grave.
" We—I and Pallas—oft the gods have heard
" The solemn oaths that bound our plighted word.
" Oft have we sworn we ne'er would turn away
" From Troy's devoted race the evil day,

" Not if fierce flames should Troy's whole strength
consume,
" And Grecia's torch wave o'er the nation's tomb."

This Neptune heard, and past on stretch of flight
Where the spears hurtled mid the shock of fight,
And ere Achilles and Æneas clos'd,
With heaven's preventive presence interpos'd:
Pour'd the dense cloud that veil'd Pelides' view,
From the pierc'd shield his brass-barb'd lance withdrew,
And at Pelides' foot the weapon laid,
Then thro' the air the Trojan prince convey'd.
Dark lay beneath him, on that flight divine,
Cars, coursers, warriors, ranging line by line;
Ere yet he reach'd the army's utmost stand,
Where the brave Caucons arm'd their dauntless band.
There the earth-shaker nigh Æneas stood,
And thus the rashness of his mind subdu'd:

" Incautious chief! at whose divine command
" Dar'st thou Pelides' matchless pow'r withstand?
" Him, whose resistless arms o'er-masters thine,
" O'er whom the gods more graciously incline,
" Back when thou meet'st him, lest, untimely slain,
" Thou pass from earth to Hades' dark domain.

" When low he lies, assail their arm'd array,
" None, save Pelides, can Æneas slay."

He warn'd him, and departed, and dispell'd
The cloud that Peleus' son in darkness held:
Then as the scene before him shone display'd,
Thus, groaning, to his soul Achilles said:

" What wonder there comes forth?—Before my eyes
" Lo! on the ground my lance extended lies:
" But—where the chief 'gainst whom I aim'd the dart,
" And hurl'd it, death-fraught, at his inmost heart?
" Lov'd was Æneas by heaven's guardian host,
" And yet I deem'd his word an idle boast.
" Fly where he will—he dares no more essay
" This arm, but wings from death his joyful way.
" No more.—Now, urging on the Grecian bands,
" View we what son of Troy my force withstands."

Then, springing mid the ranks, exclaim'd afar:
" Stand ye no more from battle, meet the war,
" Man grapple man, dash onward, grasp the fight,
" Harsh is the toil e'en for Pelides' might,
" I cannot chase or rout so dense a throng,
" Or battle lone such multitudes among.

" Not Mars, th' immortal, not Jove's blue-ey'd maid,
" Could chase such numbers as our host invade.
" But if my arm, my foot, my strength avail,
" In nought shall Peleus' son be found to fail.
" Right on I rush, where none, no son of Troy,
" 'Neath this o'ershadowing lance shall taste of joy."

He spake, embold'ning, nor less boldly heard,
Thus menacing Achilles, Hector's word:
" Dread not, brave sons of Troy, Pelides' rage,
" I too with heav'n could wordy battle wage,
" Not with my lance.—Achilles' haughty boast,
" If part prevail, part shall in air be lost.
" He—were his arm all fire, my force shall feel,
" Yes—were his arm all fire, his heart all steel."

Rous'd by his word, his host their spears upbore,
One was their onset, one the battle roar.

" Hector"—Apollo thus the chief addrest—
" Not in the van advanc'd before the rest,
" But with the host Pelides' pow'r invade,
" Lest by his lance thou bleed, or murderous blade."

He spake: the chief the voice celestial knew,
And, awe-struck, mid the ranks of Troy withdrew,

But Peleus' son, his heart with fierceness strung,
On, madly shouting, mid their battle sprung:
First steep'd his lance in brave Iphition's gore,
Whom the nymph Neis to Otrynteus bore,
In the rich plains where Hyda's tow'rs arose,
'Neath Tmolus cover'd with eternal snows.
On, as the warrior rush'd in mid career,
Full on his front Pelides drove his spear,
Sever'd his skull, and, with contemptuous sound,
Cried, as his fall resounding shook the ground,—

" Fiercest of mortals! here thou liest in death,
" Tho' the Gygæan lake first caught thy breath,
" Where Hyllus thy fair lands ancestral laves,
" And Hermus whirling his swift-eddy'd waves."

Death clos'd his eyes, while, plung'd in gushing gore,
The chariot wheels his mangled body tore.
Then fierce Pelides slew Antenor's son,
The war-defender, bold Demoleon,
Hurl'd on his front, the spear's resistless blow
Pierc'd thro' the brass that helmeted his brow,
And broke the bone; and all the blood-stain'd brain
Gush'd o'er the warrior breathless on the plain.

Then, as Hippodamas with wild'ring dread
Sprung from his chariot, and before him fled,
Achilles pierc'd his spine; he fell, he gasp'd,
Groan'd like a bull by forceful seizure grasp'd,
Drag'd on to shed his blood mid rites divine,
And gladden Neptune's Heliconian shrine.
Thus as he grimly groan'd his life away,
Pelides singled from the war array
Fair Polydorus, Priam's youngest born,
Still kept from battle till that fatal morn,
Most lov'd of all who in his household grew,
And whose fleet foot beyond the fleetest flew.
Thus, in the rash display of youthful pride,
He dash'd amid the van, there fell, and died.
Him as he darted by, and onward run,
The fleeter-footed conqueror, Peleus' son,
Smote where the golden clasps the baldric clos'd,
And the breast-plate a double guard oppos'd.
Thro' these the brazen point resistless flew,
And at the navel issued forth to view.
He shriek'd—he reel'd—with bow'd knee prest the ground,
Crouch'd, and back thrust his bowels gushing round.
But Hector, who his brother prostrate view'd,
Thus gathering up his entrails blood-embru'd,

With grief o'ercast, no more at rest remain'd,
From war and vengeance in the rear detain'd,
But brandishing his lance, and mad with ire,
Rush'd 'gainst Pelides like a flame of fire.
Achilles view'd, sprung up, and thus exprest
The grim delight that swell'd his glorying breast:

"He comes, who most has rack'd my soul with woe,
"The slayer comes, who laid Patroclus low:
"No longer now where hosts with hosts engage,
"We, mid the conflict, shun each other's rage."

Then loud exclaim'd: "Come near: approach thy fate:
"Come near, where death's close bounds thy step await."

"Hope not to scare me"—dauntless Hector said—
"Like a weak infant by loud words dismay'd.
"I too can bolt, hurl'd back on thee again,
"Keen cutting jibes, or words of stern disdain.
"I know thy might, mine feebler far than thine,
"Yet we but perfect what the gods design:
"And I, tho' feebler, with heav'n-guided blow,
"May hurl no pointless spear, and lay thee low."

He spake: and hurl'd the lance: Minerva's breath
Blew it aside, and turn'd the dart from death:
Soft was her breath, yet, by that breath convey'd,
Th' Hectorean lance at Hector's foot was laid.
Then Peleus' son, fierce shouting, onward prest,
To plunge his vengeful lance in Hector's breast
But him, the god with ease from death withdrew,
Veil'd by Apollo in dense clouds from view.
Thrice rush'd the chief, and thrice in mad despair,
Smote on the darkness of th' impassive air,
Then, like a god, once more infuriate sprung,
And lanch'd the menace thund'ring from his tongue:

"Dog! thou again hast from destruction fled,
"Again Apollo snatch'd thee from the dead:
"He hears thy pray'r ere battle—yet, ere long
"My foot shall crush thee, mid the routed throng,
"If yet a favouring god Pelides aid;
"Now, other sons of Troy shall curse my blade."

He spake: and Dryops struck, who, steep'd in gore,
Fell with pierc'd neck Pelides' foot before.
Next, thro' his knee transfixt, from onset stay'd
Demuchus by the planted lance delay'd,
Then, smiting with his sword, untimely hurl'd
The mighty warrior to the viewless world:

Then, from their chariots prostrating on earth,
Assail'd the sons who drew from Bias birth,
Transfixt Laogonus, and breathless laid
The bulk of Dardanus beneath his blade:
Next seiz'd on Tros, Alastor's son, who knelt,
And clasp'd his knees in hope his heart to melt,
And pray'd for mercy by his equal years:
Vain, hapless man! thy youth, thy pray'rs, thy tears:
Not mild, not kind that chief; his heart a stone:
And, fir'd with rage, that blood can sate alone.
E'en while he clasp'd his knees, and life implor'd,
Pelides in his liver plung'd his sword:
Forth fell the liver, and its gush of blood
Fill'd, as he died, his bosom with the flood.
Then Mulius felt the vengeance of the spear,
Whose brazen point pass'd on from ear to ear.
Next on Echeclus swift Achilles rush'd,
And with his sword's huge haft his forehead crush'd,
And the whole blade that reek'd with recent gore
Glow'd, as death seal'd his lids to ope no more.
Next, where the tendons that the elbow string,
And to its flexure give th' elastic spring,
His dart Deucalion struck: beneath the blow
His arm unnerv'd hung down before his foe;
There stood the chief, his certain fate foresaw,
Yet deign'd not, waiting death, a step withdraw.

Swift at the sight Achilles onward sped,
And with its helm smote off Deucalion's head:
Forth from the sever'd spine the marrow flow'd,
While the corse lay, stretch'd out, a lifeless load.
Achilles, next, assail'd Pireus' son,
Who from rich Thracia's fields his way had won:
The spear pierc'd Rhigmus' flank, there fix'd its strength,
As from the car, hurl'd down, lay his unmoving length.
Then, mid the shoulder blades, Achilles' spear
Smote Areithous, his charioteer,
And hurl'd him from his car, while, turn'd for flight,
His starting coursers foam'd with wild affright.

As, mid the arid mounts, a sea of fire
Fills the deep glens and roars in spread of ire,
And where the sweeping of the tempest sways,
Vast woods around, one conflagration, blaze:
Thus rag'd Achilles, thus the host pursu'd,
War'd like a god, and earth with blood embru'd.
As, on his level area, when the swain
Drives the yok'd steers that trample out the grain,
With ease they stamp it, thus, throughout the field,
Onward, o'er corse on corse, o'er shield on shield,
Where'er Pelides in his fury rush'd,
His steeds beneath their hoofs the battle crush'd.

Below, the car its axle wheel'd in gore,
Above, the seat with blood was dabbled o'er,
Whirl'd from the hoofs and wheels, then down again
Shower'd in thick drops from blood of warriors slain.
Thus while Pelides, fir'd by glory, glow'd,
Down his invincible arms, dust, sweat, and slaughter flow'd.

THE TWENTY-FIRST BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Achilles pursues the Trojans.—His combat with the River-god Scamander.—
The battle of the gods.—The Trojans fly for refuge to Troy.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XXI.

But when they came where Jove-born Xanthus spread
His waters whirling down their spacious bed,
Pelides, following their divided force,
Chas'd half the host that urg'd tow'rds Troy their course
Along the plain, where late th' Hectorean might
Had quell'd the Grecians and pursu'd their flight:
There on they pour'd: but Juno round them drew
Dense clouds that stay'd them, and confused their view.
The other half, in horror's desperate mood,
Plung'd, with loud clamour, mid the whirling flood.
The lofty banks, and far-resounding shore,
Fill'd with their outcry, swell'd afar the roar,
While to and fro, where'er the eddies drove,
They, shrieking, with the torrent vainly strove.

As, by swift flames pursu'd, th' o'ershadowing pest,
The living cloud of locusts fears to rest,
But seeks some river, where at once the fire
Glares as they fall, and in the flood expire:
Thus, from Pelides, with Troy's floating load,
Horse, horsemen, chariots, Xanthus far-o'erflow'd.
But 'gainst a Tamarisk that o'erhung the shore,
The hero leant his lance, that reek'd with gore,
Plung'd in the flood, and, like a god, alone
Arm'd with his sword prefigur'd deaths undone;
Smote here and there, while burst from side to side
Dire death-groans from the blood-empurpled tide.
As where the enormous dolphin cleaves the flood
Mid the deep winding bay, the scaly brood
Fill all the creeks, thus Troy's dense numbers fled,
And hid in Xanthus' wave-worn caves their head.
Now, tir'd with death, twelve youths Pelides chose
To sooth Patroclus' spirit to repose:
Dragg'd from the flood, like fawns, he wreathed them round
With twisted belts that had their tunics bound:
Then sent them to the fleet, and onward flew
Where'er a foe his foot to slaughter drew.

There first he met Lycaon, Priam's son,
Who, struggling from the flood past faintly on,

The youth, whom once beneath the nightly shade,
He in his father's field had captive made,
From the wild fig-tree while he cut away,
To form the chariot rings the pliant spray,
Him, seizing unawares, Achilles bore
In his proud fleet to Lemnos' peopled shore,
And sold to Jason's son: there, Jason's guest,
Imbrius, the ransom'd youth's harsh fate redrest,
And to Arisba sent: thence, fled away,
Once more at Troy he feasted day by day,
But on the twelfth, a god his fate decreed,
Beneath Achilles fury doom'd to bleed.
Him, as the hero in his swift career
Saw all unarm'd, no helm, no shield, no spear:
(For in his flight from Xanthus' bed profound,
All he had cast, o'erwearied, on the ground:)
While his knees faulter'd, and while faint his breath,
Thus the stern conqueror inly doom'd his death:

" How!—what strange wonder floats before my view!—
" Shall Ilion's valiant sons, whom late I slew,
" From darkness rise, as now, in youthful bloom,
" This chief, in Lemnos sold, once scap'd his doom?
" No, not the might of the circumfluous main,
" That oft th' unwilling holds, could him detain.

" Now shall he taste this spear, and I discern,
" Taught by its point, the truth I long to learn,
" If earth, wherein the brave, perforce, repose,
" Will for his sake the gates of death unclose."

Pelides pondering stood, while, stunn'd with fear,
The youth, to clasp his knee, came crouching near.
Fain had Lycaon 'scap'd th' impending doom,
Nor sunk forgotten in th' untimely tomb—
Achilles rais'd the spear, in act to wound;
The youth rush'd in, and prostrate on the ground,
Embrac'd his knee, while, longing for his blood,
The spear, that o'er him flam'd in earth upstood—
Seiz'd with one hand, his knee Lycaon clasp'd,
With one the murderous lance more firmly grasp'd,
Then breath'd his pray'r—" Hear, Jove-born! while I kneel!
" Deign, for the suppliant's fate, Pelides feel.
" Revere my claim!—forget not that I fed
" First at thy board, and shar'd in peace thy bread,
" When, in the garden seiz'd, to Lemnos' shore
" Me, from my sire, my friends, thy vessel bore.
" An hundred beeves that day my ransom told,
" Now be my life for thrice that number sold,
" This but the twelfth fleet day-spring since once more
" I, suffering much, regain'd my native shore,

" Yet—more to suffer, since Jove's stern decree
" Thus bids Lycaon clasp Pelides' knee—
" Me, doom'd not long to breathe the vital air,
" Me, ancient Alta's child, Laothoe bare,
" Alta, whose rule the Leleges obey,
" And holds o'er Pedasus, nigh Satnio, sway.
" Her, Priam woo'd, and to his royal bed,
" With many a rival fair, to Ilion led:
" Her's were two sons; thou both alike wilt slay:
" Thy lance has reft my brother's life away,
" Brave Polydorus, when, in van of fight,
" He fell on foot beneath thy matchless might.
" Now, here I perish: thus the gods ordain,
" Who thus to thee have yielded me again.
" Yet—hear me: let this plea thy wrath allay,
" Nor unadvisedly Lycaon slay:
" To me, not Hector, birth Laothöe gave:
" 'Twas Hector slew thy friend, the mild, the brave."

Thus pray'd the suppliant: but the suppliant heard
From stern Achilles no consenting word.

" Dwell not on ransom, fool!—time was, ere death
" Had immaturely clos'd Patroclus' breath,
" I pity knew, and by her sway controll'd,
" Now spar'd the Trojans, now the captives sold.

" Now—not a Trojan, who, at Ilion's wall,
" Heav'n wills in these unsparing hands to fall,
" None shall, a living man, escape me—none—
" And least of all that host a Priam's son—
" Then—thou too die, my friend—why weep? 'tis vain!
" Lo! far surpassing thee—Patroclus slain.
" View'st thou not me?—what stature—beauty—mine—
" My sire—how fam'd—my mother—how divine!
" Yet—mine—harsh fate—yet—o'er me death impends,
" At dawn, at noon-tide, or when eve descends,
" Whene'er, foredoom'd, the slayer shall advance,
" Wing the far shaft, or wound with fronting lance."

He spake—Lycaon's heart, dissolv'd with fear,
His knee sank loose, his grasp forgot the spear,
He sat with outspread hands—nor further said,
When Peleus' son drew forth th' avenging blade,
And where the collar-bones the neck surround,
Plung'd to the haft the sword within the wound—
Prone on the earth he fell:—forth gush'd the blood,
And the soil redden'd with the purple flood—
Achilles seiz'd, and mid the river cast
His floating corse, and taunted as it past.

" There—with the fishes lie:—who, gathering round,
" Shall lick at will without a fear the wound,

" Ne'er shall thy mother o'er thy death-bed weep,
" But swift Scamander whirl thee mid the deep:
" There thro' the rippling wave the scaly brood
" Shall from Lycaon's fatness gorge their food.
" So perish all, till Ilion strow the ground;
" So flee, while I behind deal wound on wound.
" Not you your broadly-flowing stream avails,
" All the fierce whirling of Scamander fails,—
" Tho' oft to him you pour'd the bovine blood,
" And plung'd the living steeds beneath his flood:
" Such ruthless fate on all, till all atone
" Patroclus' death, and Grecia's host o'erthrown,
" Her heroes mid their navy breathless laid,
" While I, in wrathful mood, refus'd to aid."

Fir'd at the word, the god devis'd what force
Might Ilion shield, and curb Pelides' course,
Who rushing with his spear's far-shadowing length,
Against Asteropæus match'd his strength,
The son of Pelagon, divinely bred,
From Axius' flood, and Peribœa's bed—
'Gainst him Achilles rush'd: he boldly stood,
Arm'd with two spears, the guardian of the flood,
By Xanthus fir'd, incens'd the host to view,
Whom in his flood th' unsparing conqueror slew:

And now, when nigh encountering, breast to breast,
The son of Peleus first his foe addrest:

" Who art thou, thus 'gainst me who lift'st thy hand?
" Woe to the sires whose sons my force withstand."

" Why ask"—the chief replied—" whence sprung my birth?
" Why seeks Achilles, what my native earth?
" I come far off from rich Pœonia's land,
" And lead with length of spears a well-arm'd band—
" Ten days from this since I to Ilion came,
" I who from Anxius' stream my birth proclaim,
" Anxius, who pours o'er earth the fairest flood,
" Whose valiant offspring oft the brave withstood,
" Illustrious Pelagon, my far-fam'd sire—
" Now—war we, glorious chief!—no more inquire."

He, threatening, spake—the chief made no reply,
But rais'd the Pelian ash, and pois'd on high:
Two spears at once Asteropæus threw,
From either hand alike each weapon flew;
One struck the buckler, but not onward past,
Gift of a god, the gold repell'd the cast:

The other, as it glanc'd the elbow o'er,
Just graz'd the flesh, and ting'd the point with gore,
Then, o'er him gliding, fixt in earth upstood,
And vainly long'd to drain the hero's blood—
But—wont to slay—his lance th' avenger hurl'd,
Yet fail'd to wound, tho' by Pelides whirl'd—
It struck the bank that tower'd above the stream,
And deep in earth implanted half its beam.—
Then Peleus' son his flaming sword outdrew,
And at one blow to close the combat flew,
While with strong grasp his rival vainly strove
The earth to loosen, and the lance remove:
Thrice shook it, and thrice fail'd, and now again
Tried, as he bent the beam, to break in twain,
But ere his strength's last effort yet prevail'd,
Achilles' falchion first the chief assail'd,
His navel smote, and thro' the ghastly wound,
Pour'd forth his reeking entrails on the ground:—
Death o'er his closing lids deep darkness cast,
And in one feeble gasp his spirit past.
Pelides rush'd, and standing on his breast
Pluck'd off his arms, and vauntingly addrest:

" Lie there: not easily the stream-god's race
" War with the sons that spring from Jove's embrace.

" Thou saidst a god of rivers gave thee birth—
" Mine from great Jove, sole lord of heav'n and earth:
" From Peleus' loins, the Myrmidonian king,
" Who sprung from Jove-born Æacus, I spring.
" Far, as o'er all the streams, the pow'r of Jove,
" So far his progeny their race above.
" Nigh thee, a mighty flood:—what recks his might?
" Dares he with Jove contend, and front in fight?
" Not him the sov'reign Achelous braves,
" Not him Oceanus with all his waves,
" Whence all the rivers, all the mighty main,
" All fountains, and all wells their waters gain:
" Yet he too dreads the lightnings lanch'd by Jove,
" And him who speaks in thunder from above."

Then from the bank he pluck'd the lance away,
And left the warrior where he lifeless lay,
Left in the sand, where many a murmuring wave
Flow'd with soft lapse his bleeding limbs to lave,
While the eels glided o'er his slimy bed,
And gnawing fishes fatten'd as they fed—
Onward, stern Peleus' son, wide-slaughtering, sped
Along the bank, where the Pœonians fled,
Fled, as they view'd their battle's bravest lord
Fell'd by Achilles' arm and ruthless sword.

Thersilochus and Mydon bit the plain,
Astypylus, Mnesus, Thrasius swell'd the slain,
Ænius and Ophelestes felt the wound,
And more had fall'n, and bath'd with blood the ground,
Had not the god, in human form array'd,
Thus, speaking from his gulfs, his rage delay'd:

" Oh thou, whose force and fierceness all transcend,
" On thee, where'er thy way, the gods attend:
" If thou art doom'd all Ilion's sons to slay,
" Drive them from me at distance far away.
" My streams are chok'd with dead, my efforts vain
" Downward to wind my current to the main.
" Corse presses corse, still death to death succeeds;
" Cease:—horror-struck I view thy dreadful deeds."

" Scamander! fed by Jove"—the chief rejoin'd—
" Be all, hereafter, such as suits thy mind:
" But till curst Troy her perjur'd sons inclose,
" Ne'er from their slaughter shall my sword repose,
" Till in close conflict I and Hector meet,
" I fall, or Hector bathe in blood my feet."

He spake: and like a god rush'd furious on,
While thus the flood addrest Latona's son:

" God of the silver bow, thou scorn'st the word
" By thee so lately from Saturnius heard;
" 'Twas Jove who bad thee yield the Trojans aid,
" Till the late eve the fruitful earth o'ershade."

Meanwhile, Achilles from th' o'erhanging height
Plung'd mid the stream, and rush'd a god in might:
But Xanthus, bursting from his billowy bed,
'Gainst him his congregated waters spread,
And on before him, with resistless sweep,
Roll'd all the floating corses, heap on heap,
And bellowing like a bull, with dreadful roar,
Heav'd the whole burden on the encumber'd shore,
And in his caves, and wave-worn banks profound,
Sav'd all that yet alive had fled the wound.
A vast wave curling round Achilles stood,
And on his buckler pour'd th' incumbent flood:
His foot-strength fail'd him, while his outstretcht hand,
Grasp'd a huge elm that far o'erspread the strand:
But, with its roots pluck'd out, it downward bore
All the wide bank, and spread the torrent o'er,
Damm'd with dense boughs the streams, and onward cast,
Bridg'd a firm way that to the margin past.
Up from the whirling gulf Pelides leapt,
And, awe-struck, o'er the plain's smooth level swept:

Ceas'd not the god, but fiercer to oppose
On a swoln billow's dark'ning summit rose,
At once to sweep him to the shades below,
And turn from Troy unutterable woe.
But—with a bound, far as a javelin flung,
Back from the flood the son of Peleus sprung,
And with an eagle's swoop, whose wing on flight
Swiftest and strongest cleaves th' aerial height,
Thus sprung the chief, while with tremendous sound
His corselet clang'd, and rung his breast around:
And as the god rush'd roaring on behind,
Obliquely wheeling from his course declin'd.
As thro' his vineyard, from the mountain brow,
When the swain guides the water where to flow,
Cleaves with his spade the channel, while its force
Rolls all the stones, that ring beneath its course,
Down the smooth slope the murmuring currents glide,
And onward dash, preventive of the guide;
Thus the god follow'd, gaining on his flight,
So fail'd the mortal, match'd with heav'nly might.
Oft as the chief to front the torrent strove,
Resolv'd to know if all the gods above
Thus forc'd him into flight, so oft the flood
In gather'd strength above his shoulders stood,—
Still as it rose, on high Pelides leapt,
Still fierce and fiercer on the torrent swept,

Unnerv'd his knee, the sand beneath him bar'd,
When, venting thus his rage, the chief despair'd:

"Jove! will no god now snatch me from the wave?
"Hereafter—be what may my destin'd grave.
"No god, but Thetis me her son deceiv'd,
"Who, trusting to her blandishments, believ'd—
"She said, that slain 'neath Ilion's sacred wall
"Apollo's shaft should glory o'er my fall.
"Would that beneath great Hector I had bled!
"The brave had slain the brave, and stript him dead.
"Now to inglorious death Achilles doom'd,
"Here in the whelming of a wave entomb'd,
"Like a mean swineherd, in a show'ry day,
"Swept from the ford, and whirl'd from life away."

Him as they heard, in human form array'd
The ocean-god, and Jove's celestial maid
Came near, and clasp'd his hand, and thus addrest,
And sooth'd the agony that rack'd his breast:

"Grieve not, Pelides:—be no more dismay'd:
"We—no inferior gods—come down to aid:

" Thou art not doom'd thus vilely to expire,
" This stream-god, thou beholding, shall retire:
" And, if thou heed the counsel we suggest,
" Ne'er shall thy slaughtering sword from vengeance rest,
" Till thou in Troy inclose the flying foe,
" And Hector's blood beneath thy footsteps flow,
" Then to thy fleet return, and proudly claim
" The gift we give, eternity of fame."

Then back to heaven th' immortals wing'd their flight:
But fired by them with more than mortal might,
Th' emboldened son of Peleus onward sped
Where late the battle in its fury bled.
'Twas all inundated: o'er all the plain
Floated the dead and armour of the slain.
Upsprung the chief, collecting all his force,
And stemm'd the flood that crost in vain his course,
Such more than mortal strength Minerva gave,
While more and more Scamander swell'd his wave,
And fiercer pour'd the inundating tide,
Rais'd it aloft, and loud to Simois cried:

" Aid me, my brother! aid! our force combin'd
" May curb this man, most pow'rful of mankind,

" Else Troy lies prone, else ne'er a Trojan spear
" Shall cross his path, and question his career.
" Quick linger not—all, all thy fountains drain,
" Call back each river rolling to the main,
" Swell one huge billow, whose resistless shock,
" Charg'd with whirl'd trees, and many a fractur'd rock,
" Shall crush this chief, who Troy of strength bereaves,
" Wars like a god, and deeds divine achieves—
" But—I proclaim, that not his matchless charms,
" Surpassing prowess, nor resplendent arms,
" Shall him avail: in my o'erwhelming bed
" All shall forgotten lie, with slime o'erspread:
" Sand cast on sand shall hide him, heap on heap,
" Clad in a miry shroud, the chief shall sleep:
" None shall collect his bones: his tomb unknown:
" Such and so deep on him the soil o'erthrown:
" There rests the hero in th' oblivious grave,
" Pelides' sepulchre, Scamander's wave."

Then rais'd on high the thundering torrent rush'd,
With bodies, blood, and foam against him gush'd.
Th' empurpled billow stood the hero round,
Flash'd cross his course, and whirl'd him from the ground:

But Juno shriek'd, and with o'erpow'ring dread
Lest the flood sweep him down its torrent bed,
Aloud to Vulcan spake:—" My son, arise!
" Go, where with thee in force Scamander vies,
" Speed—swiftly speed!—broad flakes of flame expand!
" I haste, where winds shall roar at my command,
" The west and north shall join, while on I sweep
" The tempest, gather'd from the boundless deep,
" To spread the conflagration, and destroy
" In all their panoply the host of Troy.
" Burn all his banks, fire plant, and shrub, and grove,
" Then 'gainst the god, thy flames concentring, move:
" Let not his threats, or blandishments allay,
" Nor turn the desolation of thy way,
" Till my loud voice restrain thy forward course,
" And bid thee intermit awhile thy force."

Then Vulcan lanch'd his blazing fires, and first
On the wide champain in his fury burst,
And burnt the numerous host, along the plain,
That lay in blood, by fierce Pelides slain;
And the whole plain dried up, nor onward flow'd
The less'ning flood along its burning road:—
As when the north, at autumn, after rain,
The fresh-shower'd garden dries, and glads the swain,

Thus, all the plain was dried, burnt all the dead,
When Vulcan all his fires 'gainst Xanthus spread:
The elms, the sallows, and the tamarisks burn'd,
To dust the lotus, and the cypress turn'd,
And the green rushes, and each bending reed
That Xanthus lov'd along his banks to feed.
The eel, the fish that wanton'd in his stream,
Or shot the gulfs, writh'd in the burning beam:
The god himself the searching flame confest,
And thus the skill'd artificer addrest:

"What pow'er with thine, great Vulcan, can compare?
"Cease, cease! to front thy flame no more I dare:
"Now, let Pelides all from Ilion chase:
"No more I war, or strive to shield her race."

Thus Xanthus, burning, spake—his beauteous stream
Hiss'd as a cauldron fill'd with scalding steam,
Urg'd by fierce flames, when heated o'er and o'er
It melts to lard a firmly-fatted boar,
Boiling and bubbling, fed by logs below,
Thus the flood boil'd, thus bubbled to and fro.
No more the current down his channel flow'd,
But a dense vapour on its surface glow'd,

Rais'd by Vulcanian pow'r: thus burnt—thus staid,
To heaven's stern queen the suppliant stream-god pray'd:

" Great Juno, wherefore me, above the rest,
" Should thus thy son's relentless wrath infest?
" Less than the rest my fault, far less display'd
" 'Gainst thee my pow'r than those who Ilion aid—
" Yet—if thou wilt, at thy command I cease:
" So let thy son desist, and part in peace—
" Hear thou my oath—henceforth, no more my pow'r
" Shall turn from Troy th' exterminating hour,
" Not when consum'd all Ilion's glory fall,
" And Grecia's torch wave o'er her blazing wall."

Him white-arm'd Juno heard, nor scorn'd his pray'r,
But, pitying, bad her son the suppliant spare:

" Cease, glorious son,—enough to wrath bestow'd,
" No more for mortals vex th' immortal god."

And the flame ceas'd, and swiftly plung'd below,
The flood along its bed resumed its flow:
And, when its force sank down, the contest clos'd,
For Juno, tho' incens'd, the strife compos'd.

But mid the other gods dire discord grew,
As different aims their pow'rs diversely drew.
They clash'd with dreadful din; wide earth around
Roar'd, and all heav'n harsh-thunder'd back the sound.
Jove heard, and thron'd on high Olympus' head
Laugh'd, inly joyful, as the tumult spread,—
Laugh'd to behold gods clash with gods in fight,
And each against the other match his might.—
Mars foremost grasp'd his lance, but ere its stroke
Rung on Minerva's breast, thus scornful spoke:

" Why, pest audacious, thus by fury swell'd,
" Has thy mad pride the gods to war impell'd?
" Hast thou forgot the horror of that day
" When thou to wound me led'st Tydides' way?
" Thy arm impell'd the lance that drank my gore:
" Now, expiate, fiend abhorr'd, thy guilt of yore."

Then the fring'd Ægis struck, whose strength withstands
The lightnings lanch'd by Jove's almighty hands.
His huge lance smote it—she—unfelt the shock—
Stept back, and grasp'd a fragment of a rock,
That in the field, black, rough, enormous, lay,
And mark'd in times of yore the boundary way:

This on his neck she hurl'd: beneath the load
Reel'd, and outstretch'd sev'n acres, fell the god,
His hair in dust defil'd, and dreadful rang
Round prostrate Mars his armour's brazen clang—
The goddess, grimly smiling, o'er him stood,
And thus, exultant, spake in scornful mood:

"Know'st thou not yet, thou fool! my force?—why dare
"With one surpassing thee thy pow'r compare?
"Thee, wretch! a mother's vengeful furies rend,
"Who, foe to Greece, dar'st perjur'd Troy defend."

She spake: and turn'd her radiant eyes away,
While Venus, where the god half senseless lay,
And deeply groaning, panted loud and long,
Led him, half-fainting, thro' the armed throng;—
The queen of heav'n observ'd, and thus exprest
To Jove's mail'd maid the rage that fir'd her breast:

"Lo! once again, from war, beneath our view,
"Yon wretch bears off that baleful Mars—pursue."

'Twas said—'twas done—on, Pallas gladly prest,
And struck the goddess on her snowy breast.

She reel'd—she fell—her heart within her died:
And Mars and Venus there lay side by side.

Then Pallas glorying spake, "Such, all be found,
"Who Greece oppose, and guard from Troy the wound,
"So bold, so patient, such as Venus came
"Her Mars to succour, and resist my aim:
"Then had the gods long since from battle staid,
"And prone in dust proud Ilion's turrets laid."

Fair Juno smil'd:—then thus to Phœbus spake
The god whose raging waves the earth-globe shake:

"Why stand we thus apart, when all the rest,
"The warring gods each other's pow'r contest?
"Disgrace to both, if fearfully we yield,
"And reach Olympus from an unfought field—
"Begin, thou younger-born:—less seemly far
"For me, more old, more wise, to rush on war.
"Fool! dull in soul—how!—hast thou all forgot?
"The wrongs we bore for Troy, remember'd not?
"We, sole of all the gods,—when downward sent
"From Jove, we both, like menial hirelings, went,
"And while twelve lingering moons wheeled slowly on
"Serv'd, for fix'd price, the proud Laomedon.

" He order'd—we obey'd—my sole employ
" To raise aloft the stately-structur'd Troy,
" Girt with a broad and beauteous wall around,
" Such as might still impregnable be found—
" Thy tendance, Phœbus! mid embowring shades
" To feed his herds on Ida's fertile glades;—
" But when the grateful hours brought on the day,
" And the year labourers claim'd their yearly pay,
" The proud Laomedon our due refus'd,
" With scorn dismiss'd us, and with threats abus'd—
" His menace, thee sore-bound in servile chain
" To sell in some far land athwart the main,
" And amputate our ears: we wrong'd return'd,
" And rag'd, defrauded of the payment earn'd.
" 'Twas promis'd—'twas withheld—is this the cause
" That thee to favour Ilion strangely draws?
" Join thou with us: uproot Troy's perjur'd birth,
" Their wives, their race, their nation sweep from earth."

" Thou too would'st deem me" — Phœbus thus rejoin'd—
" A god not gifted with a godlike mind,
" If, for mere mortals, man's most wretched birth,
" That feed and fatten on the fruits of earth,
" Who flourish now like leaves that robe the bow'r,
" Now sapless fall beneath th' autumnal show'r,

" With thee I warr'd—cease we such war to wage:
" Let men, at pleasure, man with man engage."

He said—and turn'd away—nor dar'd withstand,
And 'gainst his father's brother raise his hand;—
Him Dian view'd, and with fierce anger mov'd,
His shameful flight indignantly reprov'd:

" Flies the far-darter thus, unsham'd to yield
" To ocean's god the glory of the field?
" Why that vain bow—thou fool, no longer dare,
" Mid heaven's high host, thy force with his compare."

He answer'd not, when thus in scornful mood
Juno reproach'd the huntress of the wood:

" Insolent wretch! lift'st thou 'gainst me thy hand?
" Tho' with thy arrows arm'd, thou, me withstand?
" Thou lioness mid women! Jove, at will,
" Gave thee that feeble race to vex and kill.
" Go—easier far, along the mountain height
" To slay a hind, than with a Juno fight.
" But—if thou will—by proof of trial know
" How more tremendous far, than thine, my blow."

Thus saying, with her left hand, Juno grasp'd
Her wrists, and with her right the bow unclasp'd,

And with it struck her, and in proud disdain
Smil'd, as the goddess turn'd, and strove in vain;
While ever as she strove and turn'd around,
Her rattling shafts leapt out, and strew'd the ground—
Then Dian weeping fled: thus flies the dove,
Chas'd by the falcon, to some rocky cove,
There, destin'd not to die, lost peace resumes,
And in that hollow smooths her ruffled plumes.
Thus Dian fled, and bath'd in many a tear,
There left her bow, forgotten in her fear—
Then, as Latona to the conflict prest,
The Argicide the goddess thus addrest:

" With thee I war not—'gainst the wives of Jove
" Dire the rash hardihood in arms to move—
" Speed—wing thy flight, and mid the heav'nly host,
" That thou hast conquer'd, be Latona's boast."

He spoke—Latona, gathering from the ground
The shafts that in the dust lay scatter'd round,
Follow'd her daughter to the realms above,
Who there sat weeping on the knees of Jove:
Her heaving bosom wav'd her purple vest,
When Jove, sweet smiling, clasp'd her to his breast:

"What god"—he cried—"on thee this deed has wrought,
"As thou hadst been in flagrant evil caught?"

"Thy wife"—Diana said—"by whom all heav'n,
"Gods against gods are now to battle driv'n."

While thus they conference held, Apollo bent
His flight to Troy, her ruin to prevent:—
Deep the god's dread, lest Ilion's sacred wall
Should ere the fated hour untimely fall.
The other gods, these ireful, those elate,
On their high thrones around Saturnius sate:
Meanwhile Pelides, mid Troy's wild dismay,
O'er slaughter'd steeds and warriors urg'd his way.
As when th' offended gods, in righteous ire,
On a throng'd city lanch th' avenging fire,
When clouds of smoke roll in dense columns driv'n,
And flames on flames empurple half the heav'n,
While many grieve, all strive with toil severe,—
Such toil, such grief, pursu'd Achilles' dire career.

That time, as Priam from Troy's turret view'd
Pelides' form, gigantic, blood-embru'd,
View'd at his onset all his host dismay'd,
Back unresisting fly, and none to aid,

He groan'd, and downward sped, and thus, appall'd,
To the brave guardians of Troy's portals call'd:
" Now, to our flying host the gates expand—
" Lo! there Achilles waves his gory brand—
" Dire woe impends—but when our troops once more
" Breathe in the walls, nor dread the battle-roar,
" Bar close each gate, lest, like a god in pow'r,
" Th' avenger burst thro' Ilion's shatter'd tow'r."

The wardens at his word the bars withdrew:
The gates, sole hope of refuge, open flew:
Forth rush'd the Archer-God, in haste to save
Troy's wretched remnants from th' untimely grave.—
Half dead with thirst and dust, right o'er the plain,
Onward they flew, once more their Troy to gain:
Behind, Pelides stretched his lance of flame,
Infuriate with revenge, and lust of fame.
Then Troy had perish'd; but the god, alarm'd,
Antenor's son, divine Agenor, arm'd,
With more than earthly force his limbs inspir'd,
The warrior's heart to daring combat fir'd,
And at the beech-tree, veil'd in nightly gloom,
Stood near to ward him from impending doom.
But when he saw the chief in all his rage,
Near and more near rush madd'ning to engage,

He staid, and groaning, mus'd:—"How!—if from dread
" I fly where others in their fear have fled,
" Soon would his foot in fleetness of his speed
" O'ertake my flight, and I ignobly bleed:
" But, if I suffer those to fly or fall,
" And wing my step far off from Ilion's wall
" O'er the wide champain, and at distance breathe,
" Where Ida's groves their leafy labyrinths wreathe,
" Bath'd in cool streams, when Eve's dim shades descend,
" I may, refresh'd, my way to Ilion bend.—
" But why thus fluctuate?—Now if I retreat,
" His keen-ey'd glance will catch my flying feet,
" And his wing'd foot o'ertake me—then, no more
" Will flight or force my life's fleet dream restore,
" Such his fell force.—But, if I front him, here,
" His vulnerable limbs may feel my spear:
" But one his life: like ours his mortal frame,
" Tho' Jove now gift him with eternal fame."

He spake: and fac'd the chief, and prompt for fight,
Measur'd 'gainst Peleus' son his daring might.
As a couch'd panther, from the covert shade,
Springs on the hunter in the woodland glade,
Doubts not, withdraws not, nor e'er feels a fear,
Tho' the fierce blood-hound's bay assail her ear:

But, if the distant shaft her way arrest,
Or the sharp spear-point inly pierce her breast,
Still strives, resolv'd with one last desperate bound
To slay, or die at once beneath the wound:
Thus ne'er Antenor turn'd to flight his course,
But brac'd his strength, and dar'd Achilles' force,
Before him firmly held his wide-orb'd shield,
Pois'd his strong lance, and thus his soul reveal'd:

" Thou deem'st, illustrious chief! thy arm this day
" Shall prone in dust Troy's sacred city lay;
" Deeds of stern labour, fool! must first be wrought
" Ere thou accomplish thy audacious thought:
" Troy numbers brave defenders, men, whose lives
" Stand between death, their children, sires and wives,
" Guardians of Ilion, where thou soon shalt fall,
" Fierce as thou art, and far surpassing all."

Then lanch'd his weapon, that right onward came,
Struck 'neath his knee the greave, nor fail'd its aim:
And sharp the new-forg'd tin, with dreadful sound
In shrill vibrations ringing, clang'd around,
But the dart's brazen point, tho' strongly driv'n,
Recoil'd, nor pierc'd the armour, gift of heav'n.
Then 'gainst his foe, Achilles sprung amain,
But fail'd that glory from the god to gain:

The god in gathering clouds the chief conceal'd,
And calmly bore the warrior from the field:
Then, as the conqueror flew the host to slay,
Shap'd like Agenor, crost his slaughtering way:
Before him stood, and, as he onward rush'd,
Turn'd where the eddies of Scamander gush'd;
Just, just preventing him, the guileful god
A step, before his step close following, trod,
While now in act to seize.—Meantime the rest,
Crowd urging crowd, thro' Troy's throng'd portals prest;
None paus'd to aid, none dar'd without remain,
None staid to ask who 'scap'd, or swell'd the slain,
But all, whoe'er had strength, in fearful joy
Rush'd like a flood, once more to breathe in Troy.

THE TWENTY-SECOND BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

Hector at the Scæan gate resolves to withstand Achilles: Priam and Hecuba vainly implore him to enter the city.—He is slain by Achilles, and dragged behind his chariot in the sight of Troy.—The lamentations of Priam, Hecuba, and Andromache.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XXII.

WHILE these, like flying fawns, their Troy regain'd,
And with fresh food and drink their strength sustain'd,
Wash'd off the dust, and, soothing down their mind,
Against their stately battlements reclin'd,
The Grecian host, prefiguring Ilion's fall,
Beneath their shields approach'd the Trojan wall:
Where Hector, fetter'd by the chain of fate,
Stood guard of Ilion, at the Scæan gate.

Then Phœbus spake—" Why with unwearied feet
" Does Peleus' son thus press on my retreat?
" Why, mortal urge th' immortals? Fir'd with rage,
" Why, of the god unconscious, me engage?
" Thou reck'st no more the host that lately fled,
" And safe in Ilion half forget their dread;

" While here thou wander'st—hence—nor dream in vain
" Of glorious conquest o'er Apollo slain."

" Thou balefullest of gods"—the chief replied—
" Me thou hast wrong'd, me lur'd from Troy aside,
" Else many a Trojan chief had bit the ground,
" Ere in Troy's walls her host had refuge found.
" Thy guile has robb'd me of surpassing fame,
" And sav'd with ease that race from lasting shame;
" Thou dread'st no vengeance from the future hour,
" Or thou should'st feel Pelides' vengeful pow'r."

Then rush'd to Troy in fury of his speed:
Thus rushes with his car a conquering steed,
Who, at full stretch, as conscious of the prize,
To the near goal along the level flies:
Thus flew Pelides—him the king perceiv'd,
Him flashing on, first saw, and sorely griev'd—
Saw him resplendent, like Orion's star,
Whose beams at autumn, radiant from afar,
Mid heav'n's innumerous host, at dead of night,
Pales all their lustre with surpassing light:
Terrific sign! whose unremitted blaze
Pours in the fever'd blood its fiery rays:

Thus, as th' avenger rush'd, a dazzling light
Flash'd from Pelides' arms on Priam's sight.
He groan'd, and struck with high-rais'd hand his brow,
And cried aloud in agony of woe,
And his dear son implor'd, who firmly stood
To meet Achilles' might, and shed for Troy his blood.

"My son!"—the old man cried, and stretch'd his hand,—
"Not there, that chief awaiting, fix thy stand,
"Alone—apart—lest soon I see thee fall
"By him whose matchless strength surpasses all.
"Would heav'n like Priam lov'd him! then, this hour,
"Dogs and fierce vultures should his corse devour.
"That sight would soothe my heart—son after son,
"The young, the brave, the beautiful are gone,
"His fury slew them, or his avarice sold
"Slaves to far islands, bartering life for gold.
"Two now within these walls I see no more:
"Gone both—Lycaon, and brave Polydore:
"Both of Laothöe born: ah! if they live,
"If captives in the camp of Greece survive,
"My gold shall ransom them. Not scant the store
"Of brass and gold that Altes' daughter bore:
"But—if no more: if, of our sons bereft,
"What but deep anguish to their parents left?

" But less shall Ilion mourn, if thou remain,
" Nor here fall breathless by Pelides slain.
" Pass then, my son! within these walls,—so save
" Troy's sons and daughters from the untimely grave.
" Enough the fullness of Pelides' fame:
" Oh, let not Hector's death exalt his name!
" Oh, pity me, my son! while yet my brain
" The sense and memory of a woe retain:
" Oh, pity me, whose age demands the tomb,
" And, suffering much, foresees yet bitterer doom;
" My daughters ravish'd, all their brethren dead,
" The desolation of my marriage bed,
" My helpless infants dash'd upon the ground,
" And matron hands in slavish fetters bound—
" E'en the fond dogs beneath my palace bred,
" Whom from my table with my hand I fed,
" The guardians of my hearth, shall madly feed
" On their old master, doom'd in death to bleed,
" And with his flesh full-gorg'd, and drunk with gore,
" Lie on his corse my vestibule before.
" Not indecorous slumbers on the bier
" The youth, whose bosom bled beneath the spear:
" Fair falls the tear that streams upon his breast,
" And funeral honours soothe his soul to rest:
" But when fierce dogs pollute in frantic rage
" The hoary beard, and silver brow of age,

" This, this, th' extremity of earthly woe,
" The direst wretchedness of all below."

Then from his head pluck'd off the silver hair;
But Hector heard unmov'd his father's pray'r.
Next, the unhappy mother loos'd her vest,
And steep'd in tears, bar'd her maternal breast.

" Hector, my son,"—she said—" thy mother hear!
" The breast of her who bore thee, son, revere!
" If e'er, in infancy, my much-lov'd child!
" This bosom lull'd thee, and thy moan beguil'd,
" Now be it not forgotten.—Soothe my woe:
" Come—in these walls resist Troy's deadliest foe.
" Stand not his strength—so slaughter'd, ne'er my tear
" Falls on the plant I rear'd in blissful year;
" Nor o'er thee weeps thy wife: but far apart
" The Argive dog shall feast on Hector's heart."

Thus to their child each weeping parent pray'd:
No tear could move him, and no pray'r persuade—
Confiding in his strength, their dauntless son
Survey'd the mighty man, and staid his coming on.
As in his cavern, nigh the wanderer's way,
Gorg'd with rank herbs, a dragon waits his prey,

And rolling in his wrath the den around,
Eyes when to strike, and watches where to wound;
Thus, fill'd with inextinguishable fire,
Brave Hector stood, disdaining to retire:
Against a buttress his bright shield reclin'd,
And inly commun'd with his noble mind—

"How! if, retreating hence, I pass the wall,
" On me Polydamas' reproaches fall.
" He, when Achilles reappear'd in fight,
" Bad me lead back my host that fatal night.
" I disobey'd, and to my pride resign'd,
" Slew my brave host by my unyielding mind.
" Would I had ne'er refus'd! now sore I dread
" The curse that must alight on Hector's head,
" When all alike, each man, and long-rob'd dame,
" Lists, while a chief, less brave, shall Hector blame,
" And fill the public ear with clamorous breath,
" That Hector's rashness doom'd his host to death—
" No—be it mine Achilles to subdue,
" Or slain for Troy, die nobly in her view.—
" What!—if my helm and buckler I resign,
" And 'gainst the battlement my lance recline,
" And seek that chief, and promise to restore
" All that to Troy the fleet of Paris bore,

" Fair Helen and her wealth, the fatal cause
" That now on Ilion dire destruction draws:
" These to th' Atridæ: and to all the host
" The untold stores our secret treasuries boast:
" And bid Troy swear no wealth shall lurk conceal'd,
" But, shar'd in equal portions, all reveal'd—
" Vain!—Pity, reverence ne'er his soul allay—
" His rage will Hector like a woman slay:
" Slay me unarm'd.—But—'tis not now the hour
" With him to parley from a cave or bow'r;
" Like a fond youth and girl: as uncontroul'd
" A youth and girl at leisure parley hold:—
" Now clash our spears, thus by swift trial prove
" Whose arm shall gain the victory, grac'd by Jove."

Then firm remain'd, while, tow'ring on his view,
Nigh, grim like Mars in war, Achilles drew,
And o'er his shoulder vibrated on high
The Pelian lance that flash'd on Hector's eye.
Bright beam'd his armour like the lightning's blaze,
The fire-flame, or the sun's ascending rays.
As Hector saw, he shook, nor dar'd remain,
Fled from the wall, nor strove the gate to gain.
On rush'd Achilles, trusting to his speed,
Rush'd like the swiftest of the swift-wing'd breed,

The mountain hawk that cleaves the clouds above,
And downward pounces on the trembling dove!
She wheels aslant; his scream the æther rends,
While o'er her, stretch'd to strike, his beak impends.
Thus rush'd the Greek right on: and more and more
Troy's Hector fled the Trojan wall before.
Beyond the watch-tow'r, and the fig-tree's shade,
They on the public road fresh efforts made,
Now gain'd the rills, whence, by fresh currents nurst,
The double fountains of Scamander burst:
This the hot spring, o'er which, as fed by flame,
In smoke the steaming exhalations came;
The other spring, in summer season, flows
Cold as the ice, or hail, or new-fall'n snows.
There the broad-structur'd cisterns, fram'd of stone,
Where, in the happier hours of peace foregone,
Troy's wives and beauteous daughters lav'd in peace
Their costly robes, nor fear'd the fleet of Greece.
By these the brave man, panting on the wind,
Flew, but more swift the braver prest behind;
For not their contest unimportant gain,
A votive beast, or hide of victim slain,
Such as rewards the swift,—their toil, their strife
Was glory, and the prize great Hector's life.—
As oft to victory wont, steed urges steed,
When flames around the goal their foamy speed,

While the great prize that crowns the funeral rites,
A maid, or tripod, all their pow'r excites:
Thus with fast-flying feet the warriors wound
Their circling course thrice Ilion's walls around.
And all the gods from their celestial rest
Look'd down, when thus their Sire his will exprest:

" Ah! I behold, and sorrow at the sight,
" Round Ilion's wall, in ignominious flight,
" Hector, belov'd of Jove. Ne'er yet has ceast
" The fat and fragrance of his votive feast;
" Or on the height where Ida's fountains flow,
" Or where my altar flames on Ilion's brow.
" Now Peleus' son, while Troy her Hector views,
" Chas'd round her wall the fugitive pursues.
" Consult we now—gods, shall we Hector save?
" Or shall Pelides glory o'er his grave?"

Him Pallas answer'd: " Sire, in thunder heard,
" God, cloud-compeller, what thy hasty word?
" How—long foredoom'd, from death a mortal freed!—
" No other god, save Jove, will laud the deed!"

Thus Jove replied:—" Tritonia!—child belov'd!
" I spake no harsh behest, by anger mov'd—

" On thee Jove looks benign.—Attain thy will,
" And—what thy wish, at once that wish fulfil."

Jove's word still more inflam'd her: swift on flight
Down flew the goddess from Olympus' height.
The while Achilles, with fresh force endu'd,
Turn'd Hector's course, and ceaselessly pursu'd—
As a keen hound along the mountain's height,
Rous'd from her lair, pursues a fawn on flight,
'Mid vales and woods, or where she couchant lay,
Tracks thro' the shrubs, nor stops, till found his prey:
Thus Priam's son, where'er the warrior flew,
'Scap'd not the keenness of Pelides' view.
Oft as he darted where a Dardan gate
Might arm the wardens to avert his fate,
Or where the Trojans from their lofty tow'r
Might on his foe the iron tempest show'r,
The Greek, preventing, turn'd him to the plain,
Wheel'd near the wall, and made each effort vain.
As in a dream, pursuing and pursu'd,
Nor this can seize, nor that the flight elude,
Thus Peleus' son ne'er grasp'd him closely chas'd,
Nor Hector's flight Pelides' speed outrac'd.
Yet Hector there had died: but, prompt to save,
The Archer-God his last, last succour gave:

His strength, now fading fast, once more renew'd,
And each light limb with swifter speed endu'd.
Achilles' sign forbad, as swift he past,
His host to dare a dart on Hector cast,
Lest some rash chief defraud him of his fame,
And Peleus' son but boast a second name.
But when once more they gain'd the fountain stream,
Jove the gold balance rais'd, and pois'd the beam,
Laid in each level scale a fate of death,
This charg'd with Hector's, that Achilles' breath;
Jove weigh'd, th' Hectorean lot touch'd Hades' shade,
Apollo view'd it, and withdrew his aid—
Then Pallas near approach'd, and thus imprest
Her heav'nly counsel on Pelides' breast:

" We to our navy shall return again,
" And glorify our host, o'er Hector slain:
" He 'scapes us not, tho' at the foot of Jove
" Prone Phœbus vainly strive the god to move—
" But thou, there stilly breathe, while I persuade
" The chief to meet thy onset undismay'd."

He glad obey'd, and with exultant mind,
Against his lance, brass-pointed, stood reclin'd.—
Him Pallas left, and nigh great Hector came,
Likest Deiphobus in voice and frame:

And thus addrest, " Thee, brother, well-belov'd,
" Thee, that fell chief, by ruthless fury mov'd,
" Round Ilion's wall has chas'd: but now remain.
" Our arms shall force him back from Troy again."

" Brother"—he said—" more lov'd by me of yore,
" Than all whom Hecuba to Priam bore,
" Now tenfold honour'd, thou, who dar'st descend,
" And, when the rest remain, me here defend."

" Brother"—the goddess thus her speech renew'd—
" Me, much my sire, and reverend mother su'd,
" And clasp'd my knees, and friends, by fear distraught,
" Me to remain with pray'rs and tears besought:
" But, by the anguish of my spirit mov'd,
" I come to share thy fate, thou most belov'd:
" Now firmly stand, now, at this trial hour,
" Prove what our weapons, what the Hectorean pow'r,
" Prove if Pelides hail his fleet again,
" Charg'd with our spoils, or bleed beneath thee slain."

Thus, lur'd by Pallas, Hector onward prest,
And, foremost, stern Pelides thus addrest:

" No more I fly thee: thrice, distraught by dread,
" Round Priam's spacious walls thy force I fled:

" Now here I stand, thy onset I sustain,
" Fixt,—or to slay thee, or by thee be slain.
" Now bind our souls, and by yon gods be heard,
" Their pow'r the guard and witness of the word:
" I will not vilely shame thee, if, by heav'n,
" To glory o'er thy fall, to Hector giv'n:
" But, spoil'd of thy resplendent armour, send
" Thy body back,—so thou the like intend."

Achilles ey'd him with supreme disdain:
" Oath-bound with thee, curst wretch?—such oaths are vain.
" Such concord as with mortals lions keep,
" Such as associates with the wolf the sheep,
" Each from the other by fixt hate disjoin'd,
" Such love shall Peleus' son to Hector bind:
" A compact! not till one shall cease to breathe,
" And his blood gush the other's blade beneath.
" Now call forth all thy courage, all thy skill,
" Now all the warrior's varied charge fulfil.
" Thou can'st not now escape me, or withstand,
" This lance now drinks thy blood by Pallas' hand.
" Thou shalt, at once, thy injuries all atone;
" And—lo! the fate of those thou slew'st, thy own."

He spake: and hurl'd, fierce-vibrating, his lance,
But Hector ey'd it on its wing'd advance,
And lowly couch'd beneath its shadowing length
That o'er him flew, and fix'd in earth its strength:
Minerva, thence, the Pelian ash withdrew,
And back restor'd it to the arm that threw,
By Hector unobserv'd, who thus exprest
To Peleus' son the joy that fir'd his breast:

" Yes—thou hast fail'd, and, tho' to thee unknown,
" Hast dar'd predict my fate, as if foreshown,
" Artificer of words of fraudful art,
" As if such dread unmann'd a Hector's heart.
" Thy lance shall ne'er arrest me turn'd for flight,
" But in my bosom bury all its might,
" So Jove befriend thee. Now avoid my dart:
" Now be it wholly buried in thy heart;
" Slight then the battle, great Achilles dead,
" The tow'r of Greece, and Ilion's curse and dread."

Thus Hector spake, and as he fiercely whirl'd
Full on Pelides' shield its vengeance hurl'd,
And smote its central boss that shrilly rung,
As from its brazen orb the javelin sprung.

Enrag'd that thus his lance had sped in vain,
Stood Hector gazing downward on the plain:
No other lance was nigh.—The chief, appall'd,
On arm'd Deiphobus loud clamouring call'd:
Implor'd the succour of his battle-spear:
Loud call'd, but no Deiphobus drew near.
Then Hector knew his fate, and inly said,
" The gods thus will, I fall by heaven betray'd:
" Troy holds Deiphobus: of him bereav'd,
" I perish by Minerva's guile deceiv'd.
" O'er me, not long deferr'd, dark death impends,
" No refuge, no kind arm its aid extends,
" My fate long destin'd by the gods above,
" Jove, and the Archer-God, the son of Jove.
" They too, once wont from death their votary save,
" The guards of Hector, ope for him the grave.
" But not ingloriously shall Hector die:
" My life's last act shall reach eternity."

Then, where his glaive's broad blade down heavy hung,
Forth drew it as the clanging scabbard rung,
And fiercely turn'd; as from th' ethereal height
An eagle cleaves the clouds on stretch of flight,
And, darting thro' the darkness of the air,
Grasps in its instant swoop a lamb or hare:

Thus Hector rush'd, and as he onward flew,
The son of Peleus gloried at the view:
Before his breast, with outstretch'd arm uprais'd
The shield that brightly in its horror blaz'd:
And, while his heart boil'd with o'erflowing ire,
Rush'd like the fierceness of consuming fire.
On as the Avenger in his terror trod
His casque, four con'd, the wonder of the god,
In restless motion round about him roll'd
The fullness of its hairs that blaz'd with gold.
As Hesper's star, the brightest of the bright,
Outshines heaven's radiant host at dead of night:
Thus, vibrated aloft, the Pelian lance
Shot from its sharpen'd point the lightning glance,
While stern Achilles keenly ey'd his foe,
And paus'd upon the meditated blow.
The splendid arms that once Patroclus grac'd,
From head to foot great Hector's limbs embrac'd,
All but the clavicle, where keen-ey'd death
Wins easiest access, and exhausts the breath.
There the fierce chief in wrath's infuriate mood
Struck, till the spear-point issu'd bath'd in blood,
Yet fail'd to cut the wind-pipe, which, unbroke,
Breath'd the last sounds responsive Hector spoke,
As prone he fell, and, o'er his death-groan, heard
The scornful triumph of Pelides' word:

" Thou deem'dst,—Patroclus dead—of arms bereft,
" Thine, length of days, nor me th' Avenger left:
" Fool, I, th' Avenger, who from war abstain'd,
" I, far more pow'rful, in my fleet remain'd,
" Yet—yet awhile, till this the destin'd day,
" When thou, thus slain, shall Grecia's wrongs repay,
" Thou whom fierce dogs shall tear, and vultures rend,
" While pomp and hallow'd rites his soothed shade attend."

" Thee, by thy soul,"—expiring Hector said,—
" Thee, by thy knees, thy parent's hallow'd head,
" Now, with my life's last breath, I thee implore,
" Not mid thy fleet let blood-hounds lap my gore:
" But, many a gift, much brass and gold receive,
" All that my parents will for Hector give,
" So thou restore me, and a nation's tear,
" Troy's sons and daughters sadden o'er my bier."

" Cease!"—the stern chief replied—" tis vain thy pray'r:
" Name not my soul, my parent's hallow'd hair.
" I would, thou dog accurst! such, such thy deed!
" That frenzy drove me on thy flesh to feed!

" None ransoms thee from dogs: not store on store
" Here pour'd profusely forth, and promis'd more:
" Not if Dardanian Priam weigh with gold,
" Ne'er be by me thy barter'd carcase sold:
" Ne'er shall thy mother on the bier deplore
" The much-lov'd son her child-birth anguish bore:
" But dogs and vultures, on their destin'd prey,
" Shall rend thee, piece-meal, limb by limb away."

" Well I foreknew my doom"—faint Hector said—
" None can that heart of steel, no pray'r persuade,
" Thou, too, beware, the destin'd day will come,
" When heav'n, revenging me, will seal thy doom,
" The Scæan gate shall hear Apollo's bow,
" And Paris lay the great Achilles low."

Scarce had he spake, when swift-descending death
Clos'd in that prescient threat the hero's breath.
Forth from his limbs the soul, with deep lament
O'er youth and vigour gone, to Hades went.

" Die thou"—Achilles answer'd—" Death be mine,
" When Jove, and all the gods, the day assign."

Then drew his war-lance forth, and laid aside,
And spoil'd his arms, with reeking life-blood dy'd.

The host throng'd round, and with admiring eyes
Gaz'd on his grandeur, and heroic size,
And none who gaz'd but gave th' unseemly wound,
While thus their scornful triumph ran around:

" How mild, forsooth, how tangible his frame!
" This Hector, this who wrapt our fleet in flame?"

Achilles spoil'd him, and, when mute each tongue,
Spake his command the gather'd host among.

" Princes, and leaders, since, by favouring heav'n,
" To us o'er such a foe this victory giv'n,
" This mighty man, whose force surpassing all,
" Long injur'd Greece, and guarded Ilion's wall,
" Come, with our battle gird in arms their tow'rs,
" So learn the purpose of their hostile pow'rs,—
" If they abandon Troy, its guardian slain,
" Or the great Hector perish'd, dare remain?
" But why thus commune? still Patroclus lies
" Unwept, ungrac'd with solemn obsequies.
" Ne'er, while I breathe, he sleeps by me forgôt,
" Ne'er, while remembrance mine, remember'd not.
" E'en in the dark oblivion of the grave,
" My soul with thine, sweet friend, shall commune have.

" Now, youths! your Pæans raise, now swell the song,
" Lead to the navy, lead the corse along.
" Great is our glory: Hector breathes no more,
" Whom Ilion hail'd, and wont as god adore."

Then, with unmanly gash, dishonouring gor'd
The feet of Hector, and their tendons bor'd;
With leathern thongs behind his chariot bound,
And left the head to trail along the ground;
Sprung in his seat, the arms in order plac'd,
And lash'd the willing steeds that swiftly rac'd:
From the dragg'd corse the dust in clouds upflew,
The dank clay grimm'd his locks of sable hue:
And that once beauteous head, half hid in earth,
Tore, as it trail'd, that soil which gave him birth,
So Jove, who oft had o'er him stretch'd his hand,
Dishonour'd Hector in his native land.
Thus, as they dragg'd him on, the dusty cloud
Cast o'er his beauteous brow the o'ershadowing shroud.
But she, the mother, who that shame descried,
Groan'd, tore her hair, and cast her veil aside;
Deep groan'd his father: and intense lament
As with one woe the heart of Ilion rent:

It seem'd as if all Ilion, wrapt in fire,
Lay a vast wreck beneath the flaming pyre.
The hapless sire, indignant at his fate,
Rush'd, wild with woe, to pass the Dardan gate:
But Troy forbad, tho' roll'd in dust he knelt,
And each one singly naming, strove to melt.

" Let me, thus griev'd, thus lonely, friends, I pray,
" Pass forth, and speed to Grecia's fleet my way.
" My suppliant voice may soothe th' Avenger's rage,
" He, too, may pity, may revere my age:
" Such as I am, his sire, who rear'd the chief,
" The pestilence of Troy, the public grief,
" To all destruction, me, far, far o'er all,
" Who oft have seen such sons, so blooming, fall.
" Tho' griev'd, yet less for all I grieve, than one,
" For thee, my Hector, thee, my son, my son:
" Thy loss, ere long, shall close in grief my breath:
" Oh! that these hands had held thee clasp'd in death,
" Then we had wept till tears could stream no more,
" I, and the mother, who thee, Hector, bore."

The mourners, groaning, round the father bent,
And thus the matrons heard his wife's lament:

" My child! why breathe I yet, thou, thou no more,
" Why live thy loss, my Hector, to deplore?
" Thou wast in Ilium, thou, both day and night,
" My greatest glory, my supreme delight;
" By all alike, where'er my Hector trod,
" Lov'd as their guardian, honour'd as their god:
" Troy yet had greater been, had Hector breath;
" What now, art thou, my son, the prey of death!"

Thus mourn'd the mother, ere his wife had heard
Of Hector's fate the whisper of a word:
No sure intelligence her hearth had gain'd,
That there, without the walls, her lord remain'd.
She sat retir'd, and 'neath her palace roof
Wrought, with embroider'd flow'rs, a double woof,
And bade the maids that own'd her gentle sway
On the heap'd fire an ample tripod lay,
To serve the baths, when, wearied from the fight,
Her lord should home return, and cheer her sight.
Fond wife! unconscious from thy bath afar,
Thou knowest not that thy lord had fall'n in war,
Fall'n, stretch'd in blood on his paternal plain,
By ruthless Pallas and Achilles slain.
Loud from the turret burst a shriek and yell,
Her limbs all trembled, and her shuttle fell:

"Ye two," —she cried — "your mistress' path attend—
"Why from yon tow'r those yells the welkin rend?
"Hark—'tis the voice of Hecuba distrest:
"Wild palpitates my heart—'twill burst my breast—
"My limbs are ic'd—some baleful horror near:
"For Priam's son's dread destiny I fear.
"Heav'n shield me!—Peleus' son has interpos'd,
"And back to Troy the way on Hector clos'd,
"Has chas'd him o'er the champain, and suppress
"The light of valour in the hero's breast:
"For Hector ne'er withdrew, of death afraid,
"But rush'd before the rest, the rest to aid."

Then, like a maniac, swifter than the wind,
Flew, and her maidens followed close behind.
But when she rush'd, in that ill-fated hour,
Thro' the dense throng, and stood on Ilion's tow'r,
And view'd her Hector dragg'd the walls before,
Where the lash'd steeds his bleeding body bore,
Dark night her eye-lid seal'd, she swoon'd away,
Fell back, breath'd out her soul, and breathless lay:
Far fell the band that late her brow had crown'd,
The braid and net that wreath'd her hair around,
And the bright veil that floated round the bride,
Which golden Venus gave her blush to hide,

When Hector led her from Eëtion's bow'r,
And for her beauty gave his countless dow'r.
O'er her, yet scarce alive, her sisters bent
And closely held her, on self-death intent.
But when once more she breath'd, to sense restor'd,
Thus Hector's widow her lost lord deplor'd:

" Hector! ill-doom'd alike our natal morn:
" Thou, in thy Troy, in Priam's palace born,
" I, in far Thebes, mid Hypoplacian bow'rs,
" Where crown'd Eëtion rear'd my youthful hours.
" Both, miserable both, the sire and child!
" Oh! that no light had on my birth-day smil'd?
" To darkness, and to death, thou, thou art gone,
" And I, thy widow, left to weep alone.
" A boy, sole relic of our union, left,
" A helpless infant of his sire bereft.
" Thou can'st not guard his weakness, thou, in death,
" And vain alike to thee his vital breath.
" What—if our child escape the battle strife,
" Toil, and dire woe, his lot in after life.
" Th' intruder plucks his boundary marks away:
" His former play-mates shun the orphan's way.
" His front cast down to earth with bitter woe,
" Down his pale cheek the tears unpity'd flow.

" Bow'd with sore want, before his father's friends,
" The suppliant orphan unregarded bends,
" Here clasps some rich man's cloak, or prostrate there,
" Breathes o'er another's robe th' unanswer'd pray'r:
" Where one less harsh may yield his helpless age,
" A drop to dew his lip, not thirst assuage:
" Or some proud youth, with either parent blest,
" Drives from the feast the uninvited guest,
" Nay—strikes the child, and cries with loud reproof,
" Thy father feasts not, wretch! beneath our roof.
" 'Tis thus Astyanax seeks Hector's dome,
" And weeps within his mother's widow'd home,
" Who on his father's knee scarce deign'd to eat
" The richest marrow, and the choicest meat;
" And who at last fatigu'd with length of play,
" When slumber stole him from his toys away,
" In softest bed, upon his nurse's breast
" Slept, saturate with joy, his heart at rest:
" Reft of his sire, thus poor, afflicted, sham'd,
" He, whom Astyanax the Trojans nam'd;
" For thine, alone, thine, Hector, once the pow'r
" To guard each Trojan gate, and lofty tow'r.
" Now, from thy parents far, in yonder fleet,
" When the gorg'd dog shall from thy corse retreat,

" The worm shall all thy naked bones consume,
" While beauteous vestures grace thy vacant room,
" And robes, whose lightness female touch attests,
" Lie useless all in thy unopen'd chests:
" These will I burn, an undistinguish'd heap,
" For not in these wilt thou, my Hector, sleep:
" Before all Troy, what once adorn'd thee burn,
" And honouring thee all thine to ashes turn."

Thus wept Andromache, nor wept alone,
But Troy's sad matrons answer'd groan with groan.

THE TWENTY-THIRD BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD.

ARGUMENT.

The Burial of Patroclus.—The Funeral Games.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XXIII.

Thus all was grief in Troy: but Grecia's host,
Back to the Hellespont, and naval coast,
Sought each his tent: save where th' assembled band,
Achilles' guard, thus heard their chief's command:
" Not now, lov'd friends! brave Myrmidons! recede,
" Nor from the yoke loose yet awhile the steed.
" Here all remain, where all one grief unites,
" Here to Patroclus pay the funeral rites:
" Then be the coursers from the yoke releas'd,
" And ye, with sorrow satiate, share the feast."

All mourn'd.—Their chief the sad procession led,
While thrice they wheel'd their chariots round the dead,
And with them Thetis mourn'd: and, shed by all,
Tears down their armour for the hero's fall

Bath'd all their way.—Then, while Pelides prest,
With blood-stain'd hands his lov'd Patroclus' breast,

" Hail, friend!"—the Mourner cried—" tho' dead, rejoice,
" I will achieve my promise: hear my voice:
" Dragg'd to thy feet fierce Hector here shall bleed,
" On his raw flesh gaunt dogs insatiate feed,
" And twelve fam'd youths of Troy, before thy pyre,
" This hand shall slay, so glut for thee my ire."

Then—deed disgraceful—fierce Pelides drew
His corse in dust, and near Patroclus threw
Prone stretch'd: the while his host their arms unbrac'd,
And in their stalls the unyok'd coursers plac'd:
Then at the banquet, from all cares releas'd,
Rang'd near his ship, each shar'd the funeral feast.
Beneath the steel there many a bullock bled,
And sheep and goats the tables largely spread,
And flourishing in fat the white-tusk'd boar
Melted away the blazing fires before,
And, pour'd as from vast goblets, all the ground
Reek'd with warm blood, that gush'd the dead around.

And now the chiefs conducted Peleus' son,
At last with long persuasion scarcely won,

To greet their king: such grief his fury fed,
So vengeance rankled for Patroclus dead.
On their approach before Atrides' tent,
Prompt at the monarch's word his heralds went,
On the heap'd fire an ample tripod laid,
So might their king th' unwilling guest persuade,
From his red hands the spots of blood to lave,
And bathe his body in the fresh'ning wave.

But no persuasion could Achilles move:
" No!—by the king of gods, all-mighty Jove,
" No bath shall cleanse me, till I raise the pyre,
" And round Patroclus light the funeral fire,
" Till o'er him heap'd I raise his mound, and strow
" My votive hair to soothe his shade below;
" No! while these veins one drop of life retain,
" Ne'er shall such anguish rack my heart again.
" Now—to the hateful banquet;—but, at morn,
" King! at the glimmer of the day new-born,
" Bid hew the wood, on burden, burden laid,
" With highest honours grace Patroclus' shade:
" So shall his corse consume in quicker fire,
" And sooner to their charge the host retire."

They all obey'd, nor long delay'd the feast,
Where equal portions grac'd each honour'd guest.

Their thirst and hunger sooth'd, the warriors went,
Each to the peace and shelter of his tent,
Save Peleus' son, who on the sea-beat coast
Lay, deeply groaning, mid his gather'd host,
Lay, where the billows sweeping round the shore
Had cleans'd the margin from polluting gore.
There gentle sleep that soothes the soul of grief,
Soft o'er him flow'd, and seem'd to yield relief,
As with sore toil fatigu'd the warrior lay,
Worn with the long pursuit when Hector fled away.
Then rose Patroclus' spirit: such, the same,
Such his known voice, bright eyes, and stately frame,
Such the free flowing of his graceful vest,
When hovering o'er him thus the shade addrest:

" Sleeps Peleus's son—and I remember'd not?
" He—whom thou living lov'dst, in death forgot?
" Haste—quick inter me—else, 'tis doom'd by fate,
" My spirit ne'er can pass thro' Orcus' gate.
" The shades of men departed drive by force
" Far from the flood my interdicted course,
" Whene'er, with fond desire, I vainly roam
" Round the wide portals of th' infernal dome.
" But—let me clasp thy hand—from yonder shore
" I, once entomb'd, return to thee no more.

" We ne'er, as once in life, from all apart,
" Hold with each other council, heart with heart.
" A ruthless fate now marks me as her prey,
" Such as once doom'd me on my natal day.
" Thee too, thou godlike! fate has doom'd to fall,
" And perish, slain beneath Troy's sacred wall.
" Yet—I exhort thee—deign my voice obey:
" My bones entomb'd with thine, Achilles, lay,
" In death united, as in life endear'd,
" When we at once were in thy palace rear'd;
" When yet a child, a homicide, I fled,
" To thee from Opoeïs, by Menœtius led,
" When I, in anger, chanc'd, with dice at play,
" The child of brave Amphidamas to slay:
" Then Peleus rear'd, and like another son,
" Lov'd, nam'd me thine, and father'd both as one,
" So let the golden urn, that Thetis gave,
" Hold us, by death disjoin'd not, in one grave."

" Is it for this, thou lov'd fraternal head!
" Thou com'st"—Achilles answer'd—"from the dead?
" I will fulfil the whole, all thy request:
" But nearer, nearer come, breast join'd to breast,
" That, thus embrac'd, this interchange of grief
" May yield, tear answering tear, yet—yet relief."

Then bent to clasp him; but, while yet he spoke,
The spirit sank into the earth like smoke,
Sank querulous:—Achilles aw'd uprose,
Clash'd his clasp'd hands, and thus renew'd his woes:

" Yes!—there are souls and semblances below,
" But—shadows all—an unsubstantial show.
" Thus, thro' the night, thy soul, Patroclus, stood,
" And o'er me wail'd, in miserable mood,
" And much enjoin'd.—I saw his image there:
" Like, wondrous like, in voice, in form, in air?"

Fresh rose their sorrow that deplor'd the dead,
When rosy-finger'd morn the day-spring shed.
Now, to collect the wood, Atrides sent
The mules and drivers forth from every tent;
And brave Meriones throughout the day
Watch'd o'er the toil, and led their labouring way:—
Onward they went, their axes in their hand,
And charg'd with many a coil of twisted band.
First past the mules, with patient footsteps slow,
Right on, aslant, o'er rough, smooth, high and low.
Now, mid the glades of many-fountain'd Ide,
They strew'd the oaks, that branching in their pride
Fell with loud crash: then, splitting on the ground,
On the charg'd mules the heavy burdens bound:

They, stamping, bore the pond'rous weight along,
And to the champain push'd the brakes among.
Large logs the woodmen bore, thus gave command
The Cretan chief, that rul'd the menial band:
Each on the shore his load in order plac'd,
Where Peleus' son the pile's foundation bas'd,—
That mound enormous, in whose ample breast
He and Patroclus urn'd should peaceful rest.
The wood now pil'd, where lay along the ground
Th' attendant train, the mighty mass around,
Pelides bad his host their armour brace,
And each beneath the yoke his coursers place.
They heard, and brac'd the panoply of war,
And the prompt drivers mounted each his car—
The chariots led the way, then crowd on crowd
The foot slow rolling, like a gather'd cloud;
Mid these, selected chiefs Patroclus bore,
Hid by their hairs, thick-strew'd the body o'er.
Behind, Achilles held the hero's head,
And groan'd amid the pomp that grac'd the dead—
The mourners, where he bad, depos'd the bier,
And urg'd their toil th' enormous pile to rear.
Then Peleus' son, alone, from all apart,
Mus'd on the solemn vow that swell'd his heart,
And severing from his head the golden hair,
That, to Sperchius vow'd, flow'd full and fair,

Then bent to clasp him; but
The spirit sank into the ear[illegible]
Sank querulous:—Ach[illegible]
Clash'd his clasp'd h[illegible]

" Yes!—the[illegible]
" But—shar[illegible]
" Thus, t[illegible]
" And
" A[illegible]
"

[illegible]aters gaz'd,
[illegible]ation rais'd:

[illegible]perchius, vow'd in vain
[illegible] son return'd again,
[illegible] hair, when hail'd my home,
[illegible] his votive hecatomb,
[illegible] that at thy fount should bleed,
[illegible] sacred wood the altar feed—
" Thus Peleus pray'd: but thou hast scorn'd his pray'r;
" Not thine, Sperchius, this devoted hair.
" Ne'er shall the son of Peleus greet his sire,
" And this shorn lock falls on Patroclus' pyre."

He spake: and bowing down, the corse embrac'd,
And in Patroclus' hands the offering plac'd.
All griev'd: and thus the daylight had declin'd,
Had not Achilles then reveal'd his mind:

" Atrides! thee all willingly obey;—
" Grief has its season: now send these away:
" Dismiss them from the pyre, the feast prepare,
" Rites yet unpaid be my appropriate care.
" I, and my host, the last sad charge sustain,
" Yet let with us the leaders here remain."

trides heard, and utter'd his command,
o their ships dispers'd each separate band.
ssistants there remain'd: the pile prepar'd,
nd pac'd on every side the structure squar'd,
An hundred feet: then, on his funeral bed,
On that high summit, weeping, plac'd the dead.
There many a sheep and bullock slew and flay'd,
And, heap'd before the pyre, each carcass laid:
From all alike the fat Achilles drew,
Spread o'er the corse, and wholly hid from view:
Then pil'd their limbs, and hung, with many a tear,
Jars of rich oil and honey round the bier.
Then Peleus' son cast quickly on the pyre,
Four steeds, proud-crested, foaming in their ire;
And from nine household dogs, his hand had fed,
Cast two, that on the pile, fresh-slaughter'd, bled:
Then twelve brave youths of Troy, in sternest mood,
Slew with revengeful blade that drain'd their blood.
Last, on the structure hurl'd the force of flame,
And deeply groaning, nam'd Patroclus' name:

" Patroclus! hail! Oh hear, tho' dead, my voice!
" All that I vow'd is perfected.—Rejoice!
" Twelve high-born sons of Troy, in youthful bloom,
" The fire at once shall with thy corse consume,

" But ne'er shall fire on Hector feed, the hound
" Shall, fattening on his carcass, search each wound."

He, threat'ning spoke: but by high heav'n o'erpower'd,
No ravenous hound th' Hectorean corse devour'd,
By Jove's fair child, by Venus, driv'n away,
Who watch'd the corse, and guarded night and day:
With roseate oil ambrosial bath'd him o'er,
That smooth'd, when dragg'd, each lacerated pore.
And a dense cloud from heav'n Apollo drew,
And where the corse repos'd deep darkness threw,
That not the fierceness of the solar ray,
The tendons bare, and dry the flesh away.

But, as Patroclus' pyre not yet had flam'd,
The son of Peleus other counsel fram'd.
Lone, from the pile apart, Achilles pray'd,
And vows to Boreas and swift Zephyrus made,
From his gold goblet rich libations cast,
And sought the succour of each pow'rful blast,
That their keen breath might swiftly rouse the fire,
Wrap all the wood in flame, and burn the pyre.
Fleet Iris heard, and, floating on the air,
Brought to the winds Pelides' suppliant pray'r,
While, in keen Zephyrus' dome, the heav'nly pow'rs
In festive joy prolong'd the passing hours.

As on the stony threshold Iris stood,
They saw, they rose, and each his suit renew'd,
And call'd her to himself, his chosen guest,
While Iris thus refus'd their kind request:

" I rest not here—far as the billows flow,
" Where dwell the Æthiopians, hence I go;
" There votive hecatombs th' immortals hail,
" And the feast spread that Iris shall regale—
" But—Peleus' son, who either pow'r adores,
" With promise of large gifts your aid implores,
" To wrap the wood in flame, and spread the fire,
" Where Greece waits weeping round Patroclus' pyre."

Swift at the word, the winds with mighty roar
Flew, and far drove the gather'd clouds before,
Swept o'er the sea, while far and wide the deep
With all its billows swell'd beneath their sweep:
Then Ilion reach'd, there rushing on the pyre,
Heard at their blast loud roar the blaze of fire.
The pyre, in every part, throughout the night,
Spread, as they shrilly blew, large flakes of light:
And, all that night, Pelides, the divine,
Held with pure hand a bowl of votive wine,
And fill'd it from a beaker fram'd of gold,
Then pour'd the offering on the hallow'd mould,

And ever as he pour'd it from the bowl,
With solemn voice invok'd Patroclus' soul.
As when a father, lone, with grief half-wild,
Consumes the bones of his beloved child,
A youth just plighted, whose untimely death
Dooms to unsolac'd woe his closing breath:
Thus as Achilles burnt Patroclus' bones,
Slow pacing nigh the pile, groans burst on groans.
Thus past the night; but when with dawning ray
Rose the fair morn-star, harbinger of day,
And saffron-rob'd Aurora onward came,
Sank on the wasted pile the dying flame—
Home rush'd the winds, and with returning blast
Swell'd up the Thracian billows, as they past:
Then worn Pelides from the pile withdrew,
And sleep her soothing mantle o'er him threw.
But when the host, a still increasing throng,
Tumultuous, to Achilles flock'd along,
Their din arous'd him from refreshing rest:
He rose, and thus assembled Greece addrest:

" Atrides! and ye chiefs, my voice attend!
" First, to Patroclus' pile your footsteps bend,
" And there extinguish, far as spread the fire,
" With copious wine the yet half-smoldering pyre.

" Next, let us gather up each hallow'd bone
" Of Menœtiades, distinctly known:
" In the mid pyre he lay; but, round his bed,
" Far off the steeds and men confus'dly spread.
" In a gold vase, with double cauls inclos'd,
" Place we his bones, till mine are there depos'd:
" I will not now a mighty mound upraise;
" Your's be that hallow'd charge in after days;
" Ye, the survivors of our hapless doom:
" There the large mound extend, and pile a loftier tomb."

He spake: the host Pelides' word obey'd,
Pour'd the dark wine, and all the flame allay'd,
Far as the fire had spread its strength around,
And the heap'd ashes sank, and strow'd the ground;—
Then tearful gathering up, the bones repos'd
In the gold vase, with double cauls inclos'd:
Bore to the tent, and hiding it from view,
O'er all a veil of finest linen drew.
Then, circling round the place, mark'd out the mound,
And there the broad foundation firmly bound,
Earth heap'd on earth, to raise the structure, laid,
And back return'd, that last sad duty paid.
Achilles then the multitude detain'd;
And all spectators of the sports remain'd.—

Forth from his ships, along the crowded shore,
His train the great rewards of contest bore:
Caldrons and tripods, and the proud-neck'd steed,
Mules, and large bodies of the bovine breed,
And lovely girls, that richest vesture wore,
And the bright splendour of his iron ore.
First, for the chariot race, a maid the prize,
Whose skilful labour with her beauty vies:
And an ear'd tripod, whose capacious mold
Could two and twice-ten measures amply hold.
The next, a mare, six-year'd, of untam'd might,
Ere long to bring her foal, a mule, to light:
The third, a caldron, that four measures shar'd,
Whose unus'd brightness fire had ne'er impair'd:
The fourth, two golden talents: fifth, and last,
A twice-ear'd bowl, o'er which no flame had past.

Achilles rose, and all in silence heard,
Both kings and people, his commanding word:

" Atrides, and ye chiefs, the great rewards
" There wait the chariots, and their rival lords.
" Ah! had another chief these honours claim'd,
" Mine were the foremost prize, I victor nam'd.
" Ye know—I need not on their glory dwell—
" How far my steeds in swiftness all excell,

" Steeds, erst to Peleus, by the sea-god giv'n,
" By him to me, th' immortal breed of heav'n.
" I and my coursers now remain at rest,
" They for their lov'd Patroclus, woe-opprest,
" For him, who fondly lav'd their flowing mane,
" Then cleans'd with purest oil from every stain:
" Those manes now sweep the ground, while bending low
" Their crests hang downward, motionless with woe—
" But now, come forth, whoe'er in generous pride
" Dares on his coursers and his car confide."

Well-skill'd the car to guide, the chiefs among,
Admetus' son, Eumelus, foremost sprung:
Then Diomedes yok'd each far-fam'd steed,
The fiery coursers of Dardanian breed,
Reft from Æneas, in the battle field,
When Phœbus o'er him flung the o'ershadowing shield:
Then Menelaus deign'd Podargus guide,
With Agamemnon's Æthe, side by side;
Her, Echepolus to Atrides sent,
To free him from the Grecian armament,
In peace to revel in his proud domain,
And riches heap'd from Sicyon's ample plain,
Shower'd down by Jove; thus Æthe onward came,
And long'd for contest, fir'd by lust of fame.

Last, as the son of Pylos' time-grac'd king
His Pylian coursers drove amid the ring,
Nigh brave Antilochus his father prest,
And cautious thus the prudent youth addrest:

" Thee, Jove and Neptune, thee, in youth belov'd,
" Have taught all arts by charioteers approv'd;
" I need not teach what skill may best controul,
" Nor need'st thou learn to wheel around the goal:
" Yet are thy steeds most slow, and much I fear
" The dangers that impend o'er thy career.
" More swift their coursers: yet less skill'd their art
" An added pow'r to swiftness to impart:
" Yet—thou, my son, all arts, all skill devise,
" So gain from each competitor the prize.
" By skill, not force, the woodman's craft prevails,
" By skill the pilot steers thro' stormy gales,
" By skill, when chariots urge their close career,
" The charioteer excels the charioteer.
" But, in his car and steeds, who dares confide,
" Errs in his rashness, wheel'd from side to side:
" His coursers widely in the stadium stray,
" Nor can its utmost limits bound their way.
" But he, whose skill can steeds inferior guide,
" Looks on the goal, just grazes, closely ey'd,

" And holding with firm hand th' obedient rein,
" Keen watches him, who foremost leads the plain.
" Now will I mark the goal, so clearly shown
" That thou forget it not, once fully known.
" An ell in height, a dry trunk crowns yon plain,
" 'Tis oak, or fir, whose strength defies the rain,
" Two stones, both white, alike each limit bound,
" There, scant the course, but level all around.
" Whether that trunk a tomb of one no more,
" Or once a station'd goal in days of yore:
" There Peleus' son has mark'd th' appointed place,
" The goal and limit of the rival race.—
" Close to that mark thy car and coursers wind,
" Thyself a little to the left inclin'd;
" Then lash thy right-hand steed, his rein extend,
" But to the goal thy left-hand courser bend,
" So that the nave, which swift and swifter runs,
" May seem to strike upon the goal it shuns:
" That, cautiously avoid, nor touch the stone,
" Lest that thou crush the steeds, and car o'erthrown,
" And thou, the laughter of the rival race,
" Turn from their mock, and groan o'er thy disgrace.
" But if around the goal thou foremost wind,
" Dread not the rush and roar of those behind,
" Tho' breathe upon thy back, with fury driven,
" Adrastus' steed, Arion, sprung from heav'n,

" Or by Laomedon's rich nurture fed,
" Steeds in Troy's plenteous pastures born and bred."

Thus Nestor to his son his mind disclos'd,
And, back retreating, on his seat repos'd.—
The fifth, Meriones, firm held the reins,
And curb'd the steeds that wav'd their flowing manes.

All mounted:—then the lots Pelides cast:
First, from the helm thine, son of Nestor, past;
Eumelus next, next Menelaus flew;
The fourth, Meriones, his station drew;
The fifth, and last, its rank and order gave
To Tydeus' son, the bravest of the brave.
The chariots rang'd, Pelides mark'd afar
In the smooth plain the goal that guides the car;
There Phœnix plac'd, the chief, whose strength of yore
The armour of his sire in battle bore,
Keen to observe, and faithful to retrace
The fate and fortune of the changeful race.

All, o'er the steeds, at once, their lashes rear'd,
Scourg'd with their reins, and with loud clamours cheer'd,
And, all at once, as forth their coursers flew,
The less'ning navy from their flight withdrew.

The dust beneath their breasts, that upward sprung,
Like a tempestuous cloud above them hung,
While freely floating on the void of air,
Stream'd from their outstretch'd necks the spread of hair.
Now, low on earth, the viewless chariots swept,
Now, bursting up, their course aerial kept,
Pois'd o'er their coursers' necks the rivals hung,
High throb'd each heart, by lust of glory stung;
While loud and louder as they cheer'd their speed,
The thick dust darken'd o'er the viewless steed.
But when the chariots, speeding back again,
At their last course beheld the boundary main,
Each all his skill put forth, while all the way
Before their coursers in bright prospect lay.
Then, in their speed outracing all the rest,
The mares that bore Eumelus forward prest,
But Troy's proud stallions, following close behind,
Gain'd on their fleetness, and his chariot join'd,
And seem'd to mount his car, and bath'd all o'er
His back with foam, from each expanded pore;
While o'er him, as the steeds their necks outspread,
Their nostrils breath'd fresh flame around his head.
And now they had outstript his utmost pace,
And doubtful left the triumph of the race,

Had not Apollo reft in vengeful ire
From Tydeus' son the scourge that swell'd their fire.
His tear indignant burst, as onward flew
Eumelus' mares far stretch'd before his view:
While his relax'd, nor held their wonted course,
Unfelt the lash that gave them added force.
But Phœbus' guile 'scap'd not the blue-ey'd maid,
Swift flew the goddess to her hero's aid,
Restor'd the scourge, and by her pow'r inspir'd,
Each willing steed to fresh exertion fir'd,—
Then reach'd Admetus' son, and smote and broke,
Swift as she struck it, his equestrian yoke:
The steeds asunder darted from the way,
And on the earth the pole in shivers lay,
While, downward cast, Eumelus bit the ground,
His mouth, front, elbows, nostrils felt the wound:
Gush'd from his eyes large tear-drops, and his tongue
In awful horror to his palate clung:
While far beyond the rest, Tydides flew,
Gathering the glory to Minerva due:
Atrides next: last, as they slowlier mov'd,
Thus Nestor's son his lagging steeds reprov'd:

"On—on—relax not—all your muscles strain—
"I urge you not to rash exertions vain:

" I bid you not those steeds, that chief outrace,
" Whom Pallas guides, and deigns with glory grace,
" But catch th' Atrides!—dread th' eternal shame
" Lest Æthe, lest a mare, the victory claim.
" Why loiter thus?—no idle menace mine—
" Win—or henceforth kind Nestor's care resign:
" His sword shall in your blood be deeply stain'd
" If by your sloth some prize inferior gain'd.
" On—trust my skill: and in yon narrow way
" That skill shall prosper, and your trust repay."

He spake: they, fearful of his menace, flew,
And on with swifter speed the chariot drew,
Where the chief notic'd with preventive glance
The way that narrow'd on his swift advance.
It was a fracture, where the wintry rain
Had broke the pass, and deeply delv'd the plain;
There Menelaus drove, intent to shun
The clash of wheels that 'gainst each other run.
Then Nestor's son, with cool and cautious mind
Beyond the Atrides' track, his car inclin'd,
Then tow'rds him wheel'd, while as he onward prest
Him, Atreus' fearful son, thus loud addrest:

" Antilochus!—thy steeds why rashly strain?
" Most narrow here the pass—draw back the rein—

" There broad the course—beware—avoid the clash:
" Lest crashing chariot against chariot crash."

But fiercer yet he drove, as if unheard
The prudent counsel of Atrides' word.
Far as a discus hurl'd extends in length,
Cast by a youth, who tries his youthful strength,
So far his steeds advanc'd, while backward rein'd,
Atrides willingly his car restrain'd,
Lest in that narrow pass, wheel clash on wheel,
And rushing courser against courser reel,
Break their bright cars, and they with rival force
Close, grovelling in the dust, their hapless course.

Him Atreus' son reprov'd—" Of all on earth
" Thou most pernicious far of mortal birth!
" Henceforth, let none esteem thee truly wise:
" Nor deem, that, unabjur'd, thou gain the prize."

Then to his steeds loud call'd, " Why, slothful, slow,
" Stand you as rooted to the earth by woe—
" Ere thine, their fleetness and their force shall fail,
" And o'er their feebler age your youth prevail."

The steeds his menace fear'd, and hotly strain'd
Their utmost strength, and on the chariot gain'd.

Meantime the Argives, in the circus, view'd
The steeds, that grim'd with dust their course pursu'd.
But, at far distance, first the Cretan king
Discern'd them from a height, without the ring.
He knew the well-known voice, loud heard afar,
He knew the well-known horse that wing'd the car,
The chestnut steed, all chestnut, save alone
A silver circle on his forehead shone
Round as the moon: then, thus the chiefs among,
With eager voice addrest th' list'ning throng:

" Princes, and chiefs! say, if to me alone,
" Or all alike to each spectator known?
" Far other now the foremost steeds appear,
" Far other now, than erst, the charioteer:
" The mares, who lately led th' challeng'd plain,
" Now, haply, injur'd, on the field remain.
" Who first around the goal their chariot roll'd,
" Them and their car no longer I behold,
" Yet still, where'er I look, before my eyes
" All the whole plain of Troy distinctly lies.
" His reins are lost, or vainly round the goal
" He turn'd his steeds, unable to controul:
" Or, from his seat hurl'd down, his chariot broke,
" Th' infuriate steeds have darted from the yoke.

" But—rise—yourselves distinctly all discern,
" All that I fain would know, but fail to learn.
" But—if I err not, an Ætolian leads,
" The son of Tydeus, Diomed precedes."

Him, th' Oilean Ajax thus reprov'd:
" Why ever thus to prattle strangely mov'd?
" The mares, tho' yet remote, in matchless pace
" Beat with high hoofs the plain and head the race.
" Thou art not here the youngest of the young,
" Nor thine the sharpest sight, tho' quick thy tongue,
" Yet prompt to prate thou ever bolt'st thy word,
" When wiser men than thou should be preferr'd.
" Those are the mares, those that Eumelus bore,
" And he that guides, still victor, as before."

" Inferior, thou, to all"—the king replied,
" Tho' first in rudeness and contentious pride.
" But—come—let each, such insolence to close,
" A tripod, or bright caldron, now depose,
" And let Atrides judge who won, who lost,
" And learn, the mares are winners, at thy cost."

He spoke: th' Oilean rose in vengeful ire,
And his lip swell'd with words of answ'ring fire,

And rage on rage had fierce and fiercer flam'd,
Had not Pelides thus to both exclaim'd:

" Ajax, Idomeneus, restrain your rage,
" Not thus, brave chiefs, in war of words engage.
" Ye would resent if others, rashly rude,
" Should, thus intemperate, on your sports intrude.
" Rest peaceful; in the ring the race pursue,
" And mark the close now opening on your view:
" There each discern, discriminate the steeds,
" And learn who lingers last, or foremost leads."

He spake: and lo! Tydides rush'd on view,
And lash'd his foaming coursers as they flew.
They with fresh speed and still increasing force—
Swift as the wind—consummated their course,
And ever, where they sped, still more and more
Their charioteer with dust grim'd o'er and o'er;
While thro' the cloud, all radiant to behold,
Gleam'd the bright car, gay trick'd with tin and gold,
Where scarce the felly in its rapid race
Left on the level of the sand its trace.
Now, mid the ring, from either courser's crest
The sweat stream'd ceaseless down their foaming chest,
As from his burnish'd seat the victor sprung,
And on the yoke his lash exulting hung.

Nor Sthenelus stay'd, but seiz'd the great reward,
The prize that gave new glory to his Lord;
Then loos'd himself the yoke, and bad his host
Bear the bright maid and tripod to the coast.
Next Nestor's son, whose car by skill, not speed,
Had past Atrides, claim'd the second meed.
Near him Atrides prest:—as distant far
As from the wheel the horse that draws the car,
When round the goal the rapid axle flies,
And steed 'gainst steed contends the envy'd prize,
While on the felly, streaming thro' the air,
Sweeps from the tail its utmost length of hair,
So far alone his chariot was o'erpast,
Tho' distant once a quoit's extremest cast.
Now on Antilochus his car had gain'd,
As Æthe more and more her vigour strain'd,
That—yet, a moment—yet—another space—
The mare had gain'd the honour of the race.
Next came the Cretan in Atrides' rear,
Far as the casting of the battle spear,
Most slow his steeds, and less his skill to rein
The coursers striving on the challeng'd plain.
The last, Eumelus, mid the wondering throng,
Drove his slow steeds, and dragg'd his car along.
Him, as he toil'd, Pelides pitying view'd,
And mid the Argives thus his speech renew'd:

" Lo! the most skill'd, though last his coursers' speed,
" Be to that skill the second prize decreed:
" The first Tydides holds." All prais'd the word,
And on Admetus' son the prize conferr'd:
But brave Antilochus his claim deny'd,
And justly thus to Peleus' son reply'd:

" Not slightly thou inflam'st a warrior's ire,
" If thus thou consummate thy rash desire.
" Why his, my prize? because indignant heav'n
" His steeds has injur'd and his chariot riv'n?
" Tho' great his skill, if heav'n had heard his call,
" Not thus that chief had linger'd last of all.
" Moves he thy pity? all thy tent exceeds
" In brass, gold, sheep, fair maids, and matchless steeds;
" From these, henceforth or now, his glory raise,
" Or greater give, and Greece thy gift shall praise:
" But I to none, the prize by victory mine,
" None, without trial of my strength, resign."

Achilles, glorying in the warrior's pride,
Thus to his friend benignantly reply'd:
" Brave warrior, I obey thy just behest:
" Take thou thy prize: my tent supplies the rest.

" His be the corselet gain'd by me of yore,
" That once in war Asteropæus wore.
" With burnish'd tin the brazen corslet bound,
" A glorious gift, far envy'd, far renown'd."

Achilles spake: Automedon obey'd,
And from his tent that high-priz'd spoil convey'd,
Achilles plac'd it in Eumelus' hand,
And grac'd him glorying mid the Argive band.

Then Menelaus rose, his heart on fire,
And pour'd on Nestor's son his vengeful ire:
The herald plac'd the sceptre in his hand,
And silenc'd all to hear the king's command.

" Why," Menelaus said, " why, Nestor's son,
" By thee, once wise, such deed so rashly done?
" Thou hast disgrac'd my glory, wrong'd my steeds,
" Whose fleetness thine, that won by fraud, exceeds.
" But come, ye Argive chiefs, judge both between,
" Judge, nor to either side unjustly lean:
" That none hereafter say, by fraudful lies,
" Atrides took from Nestor's son the prize,
" And, resting on his strength and royal sway,
" Bore for his tardier steeds the meed away:

" But I myself will judge, and none shall blame,
" For ne'er injustice shall my word defame.
" Here, Jove-nurst youth, now solemnly proceed
" Before thy chariot and each conscious steed,
" Hold up thy scourge, and thus devoutly stand,
" And touch the horses with adjuring hand;
" So swear by him, whose voice the waves obey,
" No wilful treachery turn'd my car away."

The prudent youth replied: " With patience hear,
" Nor, tho' thy junior, turn from me thy ear:
" For not thy years more reverend far than mine,
" Than far above me rank and station, thine.
" Thou knowst the faults of youth, how rash their mind,
" In will how changeful, how in wisdom blind:
" Bear with me, and the prize, deem'd rashly mine,
" So thou vouchsafe accept it, I resign:
" And if ought more thou deign from me receive,
" Whate'er the gift, I fully, freely give,
" Rather than day by day from thee be driv'n,
" And curst as impious by the pow'rs of heav'n."

He spake: and at its close great Nestor's son
Led to his hand the mare so lately won;

'Twas grateful to his heart—as falls the dew
On the gold ear that bristling floats in view;
So Menelaus joy'd, and thus exprest
In gentler sounds the peace that sooth'd his breast:

" Yes—I will calm my rage:—for ne'er thy mind
" Was weak or wandering, or to fraud inclin'd;
" It was thy youth deceiv'd thee: yet refrain,
" Nor thy superiors circumvent again.
" None other of the host could thus assuage,
" Save thou alone, thy monarch's righteous rage,
" For ye have nobly suffer'd, nobly done
" Much for my sake, thy sire, and either son;
" Therefore I yield to thy respectful pray'r,
" And give thee, justly mine, that matchless mare,
" That all may know that Menelaus' soul
" Can curb the pride of pow'r, and rage controul."

Then bad Noemon, lov'd of Nestor's son,
Lead to his friend the mare his fraud had won:
But for himself, his glory to record,
The radiant caldron took, his just award.
Then the fourth prize of that contested day,
Two golden talents, Merion bore away.
The fifth—the splendid vase that yet remain'd—
As gift to Nestor, Peleus' son retain'd;

And bearing through the circus, kindly plac'd
In Nestor's hand, and thus the veteran grac'd:

" Take this:—and may my gift a record prove
" Of these last honours to the man I love:
" Thou ne'er again Patroclus shalt discern,
" And this free gift solicits no return.
" Thou canst not wrestle, nor the cestus wield,
" Dart the far spear, or gain on foot the field:
" Age bows thee down. Take this."—And Nestor's soul
Again knew gladness as he took the bowl.

" My son"—the veteran spake—" son well belov'd,
" Thy words are truth, and all by me approv'd:
" Faint are my limbs—my feet, my hands no more
" Spring to the test of trial as of yore.
" Would that my youth, my strength reviv'd again,
" That crown'd my conquest on Buprasium's plain,
" What time his sons, that rul'd th' Epeans, paid
" The solemn rites to Amarynceus' shade;
" Then of the Epean, of the Pylian band,
" And brave Ætolians none could me withstand,
" I with the cestus Lycomedes slew,
" In wrestling I on earth Ancæus threw,

" Iphiclus I o'errun, and mine the cast
" That Polydor's and Phyleus' spear o'erpast.
" Alone fam'd Actor's sons force join'd to force,
" Outstript my axle in the chariot course,
" While both at once, each envious of my fame,
" On fire to gain the greatest honour came.
" Twin brothers they: one skill'd the steeds to guide,
" To guide the steeds, the lash the other plied.
" Such once I was: ye too of younger birth,
" Such be your deeds as spread my name o'er earth.
" Now forc'd at length to age alone I yield,
" But then I foremost led the heroic field.
" Now urge the games, and on thy friend bestow
" All that can soothe him in the shades below.
" Gladly I take the gift thou deign'st impart
" And joy that Nestor lives within thy heart:
" And, honouring me, as thou exalt'st my fame—
" So may the gods immortalize thy name!"

Achilles left the ring, thus fully heard
The voice of grateful praise from Nestor's word:
Then brought a mule, the pugilists' reward,
And in the circus bound with tethering cord,
Untam'd, scarce tameable, whose rising force
Grew, while six years had o'er her wheel'd their course.

This the proud victor's prize: a massive bowl
The second prize the vanquish'd shall console.—
" Come forth"—Pelides cried—" ye most renown'd,
" Train'd with rais'd hands to strike and ward the wound,
" Arm'd with the cestus.—Then, whom all approve,
" And Phœbus' gifts with glory from above,
" His be the mule, the triumph of the day:
" The vanquish'd bear this massive bowl away."

Rose, at the word, a boaster, huge of size,
Epeius, fam'd for many a cestus prize,
He, on the mule his hand victorious laid,
And—" Let the man confront me"—proudly said,
" Who lacks the bowl—the mule I ne'er resign:
" Lo—this unconquer'd cestus makes her mine.
" Enough—in war I boast no matchless fame:
" None in all deeds can equal glory claim.
" But I forewarn my foe: nor warn alone:
" 'Tis done—his limbs are smash'd, and crush'd each bone.
" Here let the bearers of the dead remain,
" To bear him off by me untimely slain."

He spake—and all were mute—None dared oppose,
Till at the last Euryalus arose,

Son of Mecisteus, of Talaion's blood,
Who, the Cadmeans, all, at Thebes withstood,
When Œdipus, their monarch, breathless lay,
And solemn honours grac'd his burial day.
Tydides' self, emboldening his might,
And, wishing him the victory, arm'd for fight,
Gave him the belt that girt his loins around,
And the bull-thongs, whose strength the cestus bound.—
At once, thus girt, the combatants appear'd,
At once their threat'ning arms sublimely rear'd,
And each against the other onward sprung,
And their crush'd jaws beneath the cestus rung;
Stroke echo'd stroke, while sweat from every pore
Burst with each blow, and bath'd their limbs all o'er.
And now Epeius, with o'erpow'ring wound,
Smote on the cheek his rival, gazing round;
He reel'd—he fell—As when from out the deep
Curl'd by the north, a fish is seen to leap,
And flounces on the sea-weed, till again
Wash'd by the wave, he darts beneath the main:
Thus, fall'n, he bounded up, till kindly came
The victor, and sustain'd his drooping frame.
His griev'd associates swiftly gathering round,
Drew him, with faultering feet, along the ground;
Dark gore disgorging: stunn'd beneath the blow,
His head, hung down, roll'd restless to and fro;

While on his seat the wretch unconscious lay,
Nor reck'd his prize, borne by his friends away.

Pelides then, before th' admiring eyes
Of the throng'd Greeks, display'd the wrestlers' prize.
There, fram'd to stand the flame, a tripod lay,
Scarce twelve choice beeves its value could repay:—
The vanquish'd claims a maid, as skill'd, as fair,
Scarce four choice beeves could with her worth compare.

Then, Peleus' son:—" Ye who contend the prize,
" And dare make trial of your strength, arise."
Then Telamonian Ajax onward prest,
And keen Ulysses, wise beyond the rest.
Both girt, they came, and mid th' encircling band,
Each grasp'd the other with unyielding hand,
Like two vast beams that to each other join'd,
Sustain some lofty dome that bars the wind:
Creak'd their strain'd backs, that in the struggle glow'd,
As down their shoulders sweat profusely flow'd.
Swift-swelling on the sight, and black with blood,
Thick whelks, where'er they grip'd, upstarting stood:
Yet more and more the lust for victory grew,
The envied tripod beaming on the view.
Nor could Ulysses cast great Ajax down,
Nor was Laertes' son by Ajax thrown:

But when the ring, o'er-wearied out at length,
Scarce deign'd to look upon their fruitless strength,
" Or—lift me up"—the Telamonian cried—
" Or I lift thee—let Jove at will decide."—
Then rais'd him up—the wary chief the while,
Not unregardful of his wonted guile,
Behind him struck his ham, and strongly prest,
Back Ajax fell, Ulysses on his breast:
A voice of wonder thro' the circle run,
And loud the shouting round Laertes' son.
Ulysses then to raise great Ajax strove,
But fail'd to lift the weight he scarce could move,
Yet lock't in his his knee; both fell, both lay
Prostrate in dust, nor either gain'd the day:
But when once more the chiefs the strife renew'd,
Pelides spoke, and thus to peace subdu'd:

" No more contend, nor work each other wrong:
" To both alike the same rewards belong.
" Now—other games."—They listen'd, and obey'd,
And, wiping off the dust, themselves array'd.

Achilles now the racers' prize display'd,
A silver bowl elaborately made;
Whose deep capacity six measures held,
And far in beauty all on earth excelled.

Sidonian skill its work had subtly wrought,
And o'er the deep, Phœnicean merchants brought
A gift to Thoas.—This, for Priam's son,
Whom, seiz'd in battle, once Patroclus won,
Brave Iasonides, Euneus gave
Lycaon's ransom from th' untimely grave.
This, the great prize, Achilles gave to grace
The funeral of his friend, and crown the race.
The next, a fatted ox, of stately size,
And, a half-talent, gold, th' inferior prize.

" Racers! come forth"—he cried—In act to run
Uprose th' Oilean, and Laertes' son,
And swift Antilochus: all, high in heart
Stood, in due order rang'd, and prompt to part.
Achilles marked the goal: before their way
The course in all its length extended lay.
First the Oilean shot before the rest,
Next, on his step, Ulysses nearly prest.
Close, as a maid who from the flax entwines
The thread, the distaff to her bosom joins,
Thus near Ulysses prest: pace urging pace,
Ere yet the falling dust obscur'd its trace:
And on his shoulders, ever as he flew,
Steam'd a hot vapour with each breath he drew.

Thus keen for victory, as he onward sprung,
From all one shout of admiration rung.
Now, near the close, to win Minerva's aid,
Ulysses to the goddess inly pray'd:

" Deign, Pallas! aid.—Now hear, if ever heard,
" Breath'd from the heart thy suppliant's fervent word."

Minerva heard, and, gracious to his pray'r,
Breath'd in each limb the buoyancy of air;
And now just grasp'd the prize, and clos'd the course,
Swift Ajax, sliding, fell in all his force,
So Pallas will'd: and where the bullocks slain,
Had at the funeral bath'd with blood the plain,
And the dark dung and scatter'd offals lay,
There Ajax fell on that deceitful way;
And with the dung and offals cover'd o'er,
Roll'd, and his mouth and nostrils grimm'd with gore.
Ulysses foremost came, and bore away
The radiant bowl, the glory of the day.
On the horn'd bull his hand then Ajax laid,
And sputtering out the ordure, sternly said:

" Pallas, who o'er him holds maternal guard,
" Has wrong'd and robb'd me of my due reward."

Thus, as he sternly spake, all gaily smil'd,
And laugh'd to see the hero thus defil'd;
Then Nestor's son with sweet and smiling look,
The third last prize, the gold half-talent, took.

"Ye know"—he said—"the gods who look on earth,
"Still chiefly honour men of elder birth:
"Few years, out-numbering mine, has Ajax told,
"Ulysses' youth grew up with chiefs of old,
"Yet green his age, and of th' Achaians, none,
"None can his speed outrace, save Peleus' son."

Sweet was that tribute to Pelides' breast,
And thus the king, well pleas'd, the chief addrest:

"Not unrewarded praise from lips like thine:
"Take:—this half talent to the other join."

He spake: and in his hand the present plac'd,
And the chief glory'd, by Achilles grac'd.

And now before the host's admiring eyes
Achilles plac'd the single combat's prize,
The length of spear, the helm, and burnish'd shield,
Won by Patroclus from Sarpedon's field.

" Advance"—Pelides loudly spake—" advance
" Our bravest chiefs!—let lance encounter lance—
" Ye, who before us, in the army's sight,
" Make trial of your force in single fight.
" Who, in the contest, first inflicts the wound,
" Where the blood flows, the opening flesh around,
" His be the prize, my spoil, bright silver'd o'er,
" The sword that once Asteropæus wore,
" The spear, the shield, the helm each warrior share,
" And my rich banquet shall your strength repair."

Then Telamonian Ajax first uprose,
Whose strength Tydides fear'd not to oppose.

The champions now withdrew, and arm'd apart,
Then met, stern valour flaming in each heart,
Now! as their spears the rushing chieftains rais'd,
The Greeks, all awe-struck, on the onset gaz'd;
Against each other thrice the rivals sprung,
And thrice their armour in the conflict rung.
Now thro' the shield fierce Ajax drove his lance,
But the mail'd breastplate baffled its advance—
And now, as o'er the shield Tydides aim'd,
And on his rival's neck the spear-point flam'd,
All Greece in terror for her Ajax' life,
Bad each the prizes share, and cease the strife—

Yet Peleus' son to brave Tydides gave
The belt, and sheath, and silver-hafted glaive.

Achilles, then, within the circle brought
A ponderous mass of iron-ore unwrought,
Whose burden once strong-arm'd Eëtion threw,
Ere Peleus' son the valiant chieftain slew:
Then to his fleet, with many a glorious spoil,
The conqueror bore, proud trophy of his toil.

" Ye! who this trial dare, bold chiefs, arise,
" Behold the great reward, the conqueror's prize—
" Whate'er his lands, tho' distant field from field,
" This for five years shall ample substance yield,
" Ne'er need his ploughman, or his labouring swain
" From cities seek, but hence his iron gain."

Achilles spake: and Ajax at the close,
Epeus, Leonteus, Polypœtes rose.
Arrang'd they stood: its burden Epeus whirl'd,
But laughter follow'd as he vainly hurl'd—
Leonteus next—then Ajax forceful cast,
And, where he fixt it, far the rest o'erpast—
Last, the huge burden Polypœtes took,
And, far off, as a neat-herd swings his crook,

Mid his stray herds, thus Polypœtes' force
Wing'd far o'er all the iron's ponderous course.
The circus shouted, and his comrades bore
The glorious trophy to his naval store.

Next—for the archer's prize, Pelides brought
Ten double axes exquisitely wrought,
As many singly edg'd: then fix'd in sight
On the far sands a mast of stateliest height,
And on its airy brow securely bound
A dove, and wreath'd a cord its foot around.

" At that far dove, and cord, the archer aims,
" Who wounds the dove, the double axes claims,
" And, who, the bird unwounded, cuts the cord,
" The axes, singly-edg'd, his due reward."

He spake: and Teucer rose, and mid the ring
Stood the brave comrade of the Cretan king.
In the brass helm their lots the chieftains threw,
And the first lot exultant Teucer drew,
And loos'd the shaft, forgetful of the vow
To feast the god, who bends heaven's silver bow:
Hence miss'd the dove, but cut the cord in twain,
And freed the bird that sought th' etherial plain.

Down fell on earth the cord: and loud and long
The shout of wonder burst from all the throng.
The chief then seiz'd from Teucer's hand the bow
To loose the shaft that long had aim'd the blow,
And vow'd, to Phœbus, ere he wing'd its way,
His choicest lambs, a hecatomb, to slay.
Under a cloud aloft in airy ring
He saw, and pierc'd the dove beneath her wing:
The shaft past through, then revolant from the wound
Stretch'd at his foot fell stilly on the ground,
And the poor dove return'd from whence she flew,
And perch'd upon the mast before his view,
Hung her loose neck, her languid pinion clos'd,
Fell far remote, and soon in death repos'd.
All, wondering, view'd—such skill the double gain'd,
And Teucer's art the single edg'd obtain'd.

Pelides then amid the ring display'd
A lance that cast afar its length of shade,
And a bright caldron, with rich flow'rs enchas'd,
Whose burnish'd frame no fire had ere debas'd,
Worth a bull's price—at once, amid the ring,
Here, sprung Meriones, there Grecia's king.—
Achilles spake—"King! thy surpassing art
"All know, far, far o'er all, to hurl the dart,

" And—if thy will, Atrides!—such is mine—
" The lance be that brave chief's—the caldron thine."—

He spake: and Atreus' son, with joyful mind,
The lance to brave Meriones resign'd:
And bad Talthybius to his tent convey
The beauteous caldron, to record the day.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK

OF

THE ILIAD

ARGUMENT.

Hector dragged by Achilles round the Tomb of Patroclus.—Thetis persuades Achilles to restore the ransomed body.—Mercury, by the command of Jupiter, guides Priam, bearing the ransom, to the tent of Achilles.—Priam, at the feet of Achilles, moves him to pity, obtains the body of Hector, and returns with it to Troy.—The lamentation of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen.—The burial of Hector.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK XXIV.

The games now clos'd, the Grecians sought their tent,
And to their feast, or soothing slumber went;
But not the pow'r of all-subduing sleep
E'er clos'd Pelides' eye, who woke to weep.
He, inconsolable, untimely left,
Of all his heart most lov'd, by death bereft,
Knew not repose, but, wearied out with woe,
Tost, ever-rolling, restless, to and fro:
And more and more Patroclus' loss to mourn,
Recall'd their various toils together borne,—
What glorious battles fought, what victories gain'd,
And on the boundless deep what dangers both sustain'd.
Still recollecting these, he watch'd, he wept,
While his worn limbs no peaceful posture kept:
Now on his side, and now supine, now prone,
Now starting up, the wanderer stray'd alone,

Along the beach of the resounding shore,
Unheard the ocean's melancholy roar:
But not unmindful when the dawn of day
Stretch'd o'er the sea and shore its rising ray,
He back return'd, and yok'd his steeds of war,
And bound th' Hectorean limbs behind his car:
Thrice dragg'd the corse Patroclus' tomb around,
Then sought his tent, and cast him on the ground,
Stretch'd in the dust—but there by pity led,
The Archer God still watch'd o'er Hector dead,
O'er all his limbs outstretch'd heaven's golden shield,
And brought unscar'd from that disgraceful field.

While on the corse Pelides pour'd his ire,
The gods indignant view'd his heart of fire,
And bad the Argicide by stealth convey
The body from the dust unseen away.
Ill brook'd that counsel, him who ocean sway'd,
And Jove's stern consort, and the blue-ey'd maid.
Still to their souls, as hateful as before,
Troy and her king, for Paris' wrongs of yore,
Who to his hut, when heaven's three beauties came,
Prais'd her who bound his life to lustful shame—
But when the twelfth new morn from darkness sprung,
Th' Olympian gods thus heard Apollo's tongue:

" Has not, relentless gods! mid rites divine,
" With rams and bullocks Hector heap'd your shrine?
" Whom dead, you injure, nor his corse restore,
" Nor give his wife to view her lord once more;
" Nor, that his boy, his mother, and his sire,
" And Troy's whole race should raise his funeral pyre.
" And aid you Peleus' son? whose ruthless soul,
" Nor nature's laws, nor sense of right controul,
" But, stern in strength, a lion unsubdu'd,
" Foams for new slaughter and fresh feasts of blood:
" Who, no compassion knows, no sense of shame
" That guides the soul to good, or goads to blame.
" When mortals mourn their best-beloved dead,
" The filial bosom, or fraternal head,
" Exhaust with grief, at length they leave the bier,
" And satiate with affliction, dry the tear.
" Hence, the kind Fates, in pity to mankind
" Gave them that best of gifts, a patient mind;
" But this fierce chief that slew, pollutes the dead,
" And drags around Patroclus' funeral bed:
" Vile deed, and worse than profitless—a deed
" That well might doom him by our wrath to bleed,
" Great tho' his fame, heaven strikes the man unjust
" That wounds the dead, and wrongs the insensate dust."

" Be"—Juno answer'd—" all thou utter'st done,
" If honour'd like Pelides, Priam's son--

" Hector, a mortal, milk'd a mortal's breast,
" Achilles' lip a goddess' bosom prest.
" I nurs'd, I rear'd her, and in spousal join'd
" To Peleus, dear to each celestial mind;
" When his rich banquet grac'd heaven's gladden'd choir,
" And thou, perfidious god, there swep'st the lyre."

" Peace, Juno" — Jove thus spake — " thy rage restrain:
" Ne'er shall those heroes like distinction gain,
" Yet Hector was most lov'd of every god,
" Lov'd beyond all who e'er in Troy abode.
" Ne'er were my rites delay'd: he honour'd Jove:
" His feasts with fragrance fill'd my courts above.
" Choice lambs and bulls were on my altar laid,
" And heaven's whole due by Hector largely paid—
" But steal not furtively the corse away,
" 'Tis vain—so Thetis watches night and day—
" Speed, Iris! speed: bid Thetis here attend:
" The word of wisdom shall her spirit bend:
" That Priam's gifts may soothe Pelides' ire,
" And ransom'd Hector gain the funeral pyre."

Wing'd Iris, fleet as air, at once withdrew,
And now 'twixt Samos and rough Imbrus flew.

There plung'd, and where the goddess inly leapt
The waves roll'd back, then murmuring o'er her swept.
She sank; as, arm'd with horn, the plunging lead,
Death to the raw-gorg'd fishes, strikes their bed;
Then found amid each sister of the wave
The goddess seated in her crystal cave,
The while she wept her son's predestin'd death
Far from the much-lov'd land that gave him breath.

"Rise"—Iris said—"the eternal wisdom hear."—
"Why"—Thetis answer'd—"wherefore there appear?
"Amid th' immortals bath'd in bliss, I dread
"To proffer to their scorn my woe-bow'd head—
"Yet not to Thetis vain th' almighty word:
"Still be by me Jove's voice of wisdom heard."

Then a dark veil the goddess o'er her drew,
The darkest veil, to hide her tears from view.
Wing'd Iris led the way: as up they sprung,
On either side the parted billows hung:
And now they reach'd the shore, now heav'n, and found
Thron'd Jove by all the gods encompass'd round:
And as the sea-nymph bent to hail her sire,
Pallas disdain'd not from her seat retire,
And in her hand majestic Juno plac'd
Her golden cup, and with kind welcome grac'd:

The sea-nymph tasted, then return'd the bowl,
And Jove and Thetis commun'd, soul with soul.

" Thou com'st before my throne in grief of heart,
" That ne'er will lightly from thy mind depart:
" I know it.—Yet from me the motive hear,
" Why Jove thus bids thee at his throne appear.
" Nine days the heav'nly pow'rs in adverse force
" For Peleus' son contend, and Hector's corse:
" Some, Mercury bad by stealth bear off the slain:
" But 'tis my will thy son shall glory gain:
" So shall I best my zeal for Thetis prove,
" Nor thou in future doubt the heart of Jove.
" Speed, warn thy son of heaven's resentful ire,
" Warn how Jove's wrath condemns his heart of fire,
" Condemns that rage which maddens o'er the slain,
" Nor back to Ilion yields his corse again.
" So shall he free the dead, nor Jove offend:
" While I to Priam's dome wing'd Iris send,
" By costliest presents to redeem his son,
" And soothe Pelides, by large ransom won."

He spake—at once, with instantaneous flight,
Flew the swift sea-nymph from th' Olympian height,
Came to his tent, and there the mourner found,
And heard afar his heart-felt groans resound.

Round him his chiefs their wonted meal prepar'd,
The sheep fresh-slaughter'd, and the banquet shar'd,
The while her hand in his the mother prest,
And, softly-soothing, thus her son addrest:

" Wherefore, my son, why thus, by grief subdu'd,
" Consume thy soul, and scorn th' untasted food?
" Why sleep forbid thy wearied lids to close,
" Nor, lur'd by beauty, solace thy repose?
" Most fleet thy dream of life, and round thee wait
" Death, and the darkness of o'ershadowing fate.
" Yet—hear!—I warn thee of the wrath above,
" And chiefly of th' avenging ire of Jove,
" That thou the slayer, madd'ning o'er the slain,
" All ransom scorn'st, nor yield'st the corse again.
" Son, at a mother's pray'r, thy wrath give o'er,
" Receive the presents, and the dead restore."

" Approach"—he cried—" whoe'er—since will'd by Jove,
" And from my tent the ransom'd corse remove."

While Thetis and her son thus bow'd with grief,
In mutual conference sought and found relief;
" Go forth"—Saturnius cried—" my word obey,
" To sacred Ilion, Iris, wing thy way,

" Bid Priam seek yon ships, redeem his son,
" And soothe Pelides, by large presents won,
" On to the Grecian navy, lonely bend,
" Nor let a son of Troy his path attend.—
" Alone, an ancient herald at his side
" The mules shall govern, and his chariot guide;
" And back to sacred Troy convey again
" The breathless hero by Pelides slain.
" Let not the dread of death his course delay,
" No terror turn him from his destin'd way;—
" The Argicide shall guide, shall onward lead,
" Till to Achilles' tent the king proceed;
" There let him enter, nor Pelides dread,
" That hero will not wound, but guard his head:
" For Peleus' son not senseless, rash, unjust,
" But prompt to raise the suppliant from the dust."

Jove spake, wing'd Iris flew, and Priam found,
Where woe and lamentation groan'd around:
His children in the courts around their sire
Sat, bathing with their tears their sad attire:—
He, in the midst, beneath his sordid vest,
Lay in the dust that strew'd his head and breast,
Which ever, as he roll'd along the ground,
His hand had grasp'd, and thickly show'r'd around—

And many a daughter in his palace mourn'd,
And many a matron, those who ne'er return'd,
The brave, the good, who lay, by Grecians slain,
In blood unburied on their native plain.
'Twas thus: when Hermes drew the monarch near,
And, with soft greeting, strove to soothe his fear:

" Be of good courage, King, thy heart resume;
" Not to embitter,—to console thy doom,
" I come from him, who, thron'd in heav'n above,
" On thee looks down with pity, gracious Jove.
" He bids thee seek yon ships, redeem thy son,
" And soothe Pelides, by thy presents won,
" Bids thee, all lonely, to the Grecians bend,
" And that no son of Troy thy course attend;
" Alone, one ancient herald at thy side
" The mules to govern, and the chariot guide;
" And back to sacred Troy convey again
" The breathless hero, by Pelides slain.
" Let not the dread of death thy course delay,
" No terror turn thee from thy destin'd way;
" The Argicide shall guide, shall onward lead,
" Till to Achilles' presence thou proceed,
" There boldly enter, nor Pelides dread,
" That hero will not wound, but guard thy head.
" For Peleus' son, not senseless, rash, unjust,
" But prompt to raise the suppliant from the dust."

She spake: and Priam, as she fled in air,
Swift bad his sons the mule-drawn car prepare,
And on it bind a chest: then swiftly past,
Where his high-cedar'd roof rich fragrance cast,
Guard of his treasures; there his consort call'd,
And thus with each dread word her soul appall'd:

" Hear, thou belov'd!—From Jove on mission sent
" A goddess, bad me seek Pelides' tent,
" There soothe his soul, and to redeem the dead,
" Large gifts, before him, Hector's ransom, spread—
" But now, ere I depart, declare thy mind,
" Art thou, as I am, thus alike inclin'd?
" Me much my spirit prompts, without delay,
" Beyond the Grecian camp to press my way."

" Where, far and near renown'd"—she sad replied—
" The wisdom that once wont thy actions guide?
" How with what confidence, thus lonely go,
" And dare the presence of thy direst foe,
" By whom, thy sons, the brave, have oft-time bled?
" Steel'd is thy heart. Thou, seen by him, art dead:
" Grasp'd by that ruthless fiend, thy days are o'er,
" Nor reverence nor compassion move him more—
" Stay—let us mourn apart, and weep that son,
" Him, o'er whose birth fell fate such misery spun.

" When first I brought him forth, 'twas doom'd that hour,
" That far from us fierce dogs should him devour,
" His dogs, whose heart, while burst its inmost vein,
" Fain wou'd I feast on, and his life-blood drain.
" Fain with tremendous deeds that deed repay,
" Which robb'd my glory of the light of day,
" Who, for Troy's sons and daughters, death withstood,
" Nor thought of flight, when Ilion claim'd his blood."

" Cease"—Priam answer'd—" all remonstrance, vain,
" Nor me, impatient to depart, detain:
" Let not beneath my roof thy voice be heard,
" Like the drear shriek of an ill-omen'd bird.—
" Had any mortal this command convey'd,
" Priest, prophet, augur, this to Priam said,
" I sure had deem'd it false, nor so deceiv'd
" Had e'er such palpable deceit believ'd.
" But—since the voice celestial smote my ear,
" Since visibly the goddess deign'd appear,
" Jove's word shall stand: and there, if doom'd to bleed,
" I will myself accelerate the deed,—
" There let Achilles close my willing breath,
" While my last tear shall fall on Hector clasp'd in death."

He spake, and op'd the coverts of his chests,
And forth selected twelve resplendent vests,
Twelve single cloaks, twelve mantles finely wrought,
Twelve robes, twelve carpets with embroidery fraught:
Forth two bright tripods and four caldrons bore,
Ten talents weigh'd, and all of golden ore,
A cup of wondrous beauty, gift of Thrace,
A glorious gift his embassy to grace;
He spar'd it not, so, by such present won,
The Father once again might clasp his son—
Then, issuing-forth, by quick impatience mov'd,
Drove from his porch the throng, and thus reprov'd:

" Hence, worthless race!—How—haunts not grief
your home?
" Must ye thus vex my sorrow-sacred dome?
" Soothes it your woe, that Jove has bow'd my head:
" Soothes it, that Priam weeps his Hector dead?
" Ye too shall feel his loss.—Now, easier far,
" The Grecian sword shall mow your ranks in war.
" But ere I view the siege and sack of Troy,
" May Jove, in mercy, Priam first destroy!"

Then with his sceptre drove away the rest,
And with reproachful taunt his sons addrest,—

Paris, and Helenus, and Pammon's might,
Antiphonus, Polites, bold in fight,
Deiphobus, Dius, Agathon renown'd,
And brave Hippothous heard his wrathful sound:

" Inglorious race! wou'd that in Hector's stead,
" Ye all had in yon ships together bled!
" Ah wretch! of all my noblest sons bereft:
" Of these not one in spacious Ilion left.
" Fam'd Mestor, Troilus once skill'd to guide
" The battle car, and turn the foe aside,
" And matchless Hector, who, mid mortals trod
" Like an immortal, and a son of God:
" Those fell in war.—The refuse now remain,
" Whose mincing measures lead the wanton train,
" Whose lambs and kids the plunder'd hinds deplore,
" And banquets smoke from Ilion's ravish'd store—
" Will you not haste, and now without delay
" Place on the car these gifts, and speed my way?"

Aw'd by his wrathful taunts, the sons obey'd,
Brought forth the mule-drawn car, bright, newly made,
Bound on the chest, and from its station brought
The boxen yoke with rings elaborate wrought,
And with the yoke its trace nine cubits long
Fix'd to the pole's far end with fast'ning thong,

Then thro' the yoke the brace securely bound,
And wreath'd each side with triple cords around;
First, singly drawn, then thrust their ends unseen
Thro' the void space the yoke and pole between.
Next in the car the various gifts convey'd
And Hector's ransom in due order laid:
Then yok'd the firm-hoof'd mules, which Mysia's race
Gave, glorious gift, proud Ilion's king to grace—
His sons then forth the steeds of Priam led,
Whom in their stalls the king oft fondly fed:
These, in the spacious court, with cautious mind,
The king and herald to the chariot join'd:
There Hecuba, bow'd down with misery, brought
A golden bowl, with wine high-flavour'd fraught,
Their way by due libations to prepare,
Then stood before the steeds and breath'd her pray'r:

" Take this—pour forth to Jove's paternal pow'r,
" To guide and guard thee in this desperate hour,
" And safe restore, since thus thou wilt depart,
" Nor reck'st the fear of this foreboding heart.
" But chiefly supplicate th' Idæan Jove,
" Who spreads o'er Ilion his o'ershadowing love:
" So may he send, responsive to thy word,
" A messenger to thee, his favourite bird,

" Supreme in strength: and thou—that bird in sight—
" May gain the hostile ships beneath his flight.—
" If Jove refuse, howe'er thy heart incline,
" Go not—if yet avail a pray'r like mine."

" Lov'd wife"—the aged monarch thus replied—
" Ne'er be by me thy kind request denied:
" 'Tis right to raise the suppliant hands to Jove,
" So haply may our pray'r his pity move."

He spake, and to her servant gave command
To pour pure water on his suppliant hand—
The maid drew near, and to the monarch gave
The ewer and the cup his hands to lave.
His hands now cleans'd, he took the golden bowl,
Stood mid the court, and breath'd in pray'r his soul,
And pouring forth the wine, to heav'n up-gaz'd,
And thus his voice of supplication rais'd:

" Hear, Sire of heav'n, hear! Ida's sov'reign lord!
" God of the gods, most glorious, most ador'd,
" Give me beneath thy aid, protecting Jove,
" To gain Achilles' grace, and pity move.
" Send thy fleet messenger, of matchless might,
" Thy favourite bird, auspicious, on my right,

" That I, beholding him, securely led,
" May gain yon fleet, nor fierce Pelides dread."

He spake, and Jove consenting to his pray'r,
Sent forth his eagle thro' the yielding air,
The bird, for surest auguries, highly fam'd,
The chaser, dark of plumage, Percnos nam'd,
Whose stretch of pennons spreads on either side,
Far as a palace portal, vast and wide:
Thus, on their right, before up-gazing Troy,
Sail'd his dark wings, and fill'd each heart with joy.—

The king, swift-mounting his resplendent seat,
Urg'd thro' the porch his steeds' resounding feet.
First, to the four-wheel'd litter, firmly join'd
The mules, to skill'd Idæus' care consign'd;
Next thro' the city, urging on their speed,
Impatient Priam lash'd each foaming steed:
His sons, all follow'd, all with woe o'ercast,
As on to death they deem'd their father past:
But when he Troy had left, and reach'd the plain,
All back disconsolate return'd again.
Then, as the king his forward way pursu'd,
Jove, from the height of heav'n the mourner view'd,
And, pitying, spake to Hermes:—" Son, whose mind
" Still links its sympathy with human-kind,

" Still prompt to hear and help: go, wing thy speed,
" And to the Grecian fleet the monarch lead,
" So lead, that none discern, no Greek prevent
" The monarch passing to Pelides' tent."
Nor Hermes disobeyed; but quickly bound
Th' ambrosial wings of gold, his feet around,
Wings that outrace the fleetness of the wind,
And in their flight leave earth and sea behind:
Then took his rod, of pow'r to soothe and close
The eye in sleep, or raise from deep repose:
Then, to the Hellespont and Ilion came
In guise a royal youth in face and frame,
A youth in all life's loveliness array'd,
O'er the warm cheek when steals the downy shade.
But when the king had reach'd the flood that flows
Beyond the tomb, whose height o'er Ilus rose,
They stay'd their beasts to drink, while fading day
Sank gradual into twilight shade away:
Then, as now near them Hermes onward prest,
The cautious herald thus the king addrest:

" Reflect—our lives at risk—I see the foe,
" We shall not long survive: death waits the blow:—
" Haste—let us to our steeds entrust our flight,
" Or clasp his knees, and deprecate his might."

Mute, motionless, distraught with doubt and dread,
The grey hairs upward bristling on his head,
The veteran stood, when, with mild accent bland,
The god drew near, and softly prest his hand :

" Say, father, why such troublous vigils keep,
" Why urge thy steeds while others sweetly sleep?
" How!—fear'st thou not the Greeks, in hostile mood
" Who near thee camp, and watch to shed thy blood?
" Of these, if one, now in the day's decline,
" View thee with all thy wealth, what refuge, thine?
" Thou art no longer young, nor young thy guide:
" Ye cannot turn th' aggressor's blow aside.
" I will not harm thee, but, if others dare,
" Guard, for like thine, my father's silver hair."

" My son! 'tis true"—The god-like king replied—
" True all thy words:—age needs some safer guide,
" But sure a god's kind hand has deign'd to aid,
" Who such a wanderer here has now convey'd,
" Mature in wisdom, yet—so fair, so young,
" And blest thyself, from blissful parents sprung."

" Thine too"—the god rejoin'd—" most true thy word,
" All that I now from thee have clearly heard.

" But say—hence bear'st thou for far chiefs to keep
" Secure from spoil, thy treasure's hoarded heap?
" Or have the sons of Troy, who fear her fall,
" Already fled from Ilion's sacred wall?
" Since he, thy son, is slain, their bravest far,
" Nor than the boldest Greek less bold in war."

" Who art thou?"—Priam said—" Who gave thee breath?
" Thou, who thus kindly dwell'st on Hector's death."

" Thou prov'st me, reverend sire"—the god rejoin'd-
" And ask'st of Hector with suspicious mind.
" Oft have I seen thy Hector's stately form,
" The hero tow'ring in the battle storm:
" And when array'd in blood, and girt with flame,
" The conqueror mid our fleet wide-slaughtering came;
" We stood, and wonder'd: for Pelides' rage
" 'Gainst Atreus' son, forbade the war to wage.
" His servant, I: here in one ship we came,
" A Myrmidon my sire, well known to fame,
" Polyctor, such as thine his hoary head:
" Six sons, beside me, blest his nuptial bed:
" The lots we cast, me, mine to battle sent;
" Now, from the ships my steps I onward bent,

" For, in their strength, our hosts, at dawn of day,
" 'Gainst Ilion's turrets plant their war-array;
" Tir'd of repose, inaction they disdain,
" Nor longer dare the chiefs their rage restrain."

The god-like king rejoin'd: " Since thou, my son,
" Serv'st in Achilles' tent, a Myrmidon,
" Lies Hector in the fleet, the truth declare,
" Or, limb by limb, gaunt dogs his body tear?"

" Nor him"—the god replied—" fierce birds of prey,
" Nor him, gorg'd dogs rend limb by limb away.
" His corse yet lies within Achilles' tent,
" Where none watch o'er him, none his loss lament.
" This, the twelfth day.—No taints his body stain,
" No worm there gnaws that banquets on the slain.
" What tho' each morn Achilles drag the dead
" Around his lov'd Patroclus' funeral bed,
" He lies unblemish'd.—Thou would'st wond'ring view
" His corse, firm, bloodless, fresh in fragrant dew;
" No scar, no taint, but every wound all clos'd,
" Tho' gor'd by numbers when he lay expos'd.
" Thus the blest gods o'er him their care extend,
" And whom they lov'd when living, dead defend."

He spake:—the time-grac'd king exultant said,
" Be to the gods—'tis right—gifts duly paid.
" Ne'er, thro his veins while flow'd the vital tide,
" My son due honours to the gods denied:
" Hence, ne'er the gods, when past his transient breath,
" Forget my Hector in the house of death.
" But—take this beauteous cup—and—heav'n consent!
" Guide me securely to Achilles' tent."

" Thou, elder-born"—the god replied again—
" Thou tempt'st me, younger far, yet tempt'st in vain.
" Thou would'st, unknown to great Achilles, give
" What I, unknown to him, will ne'er receive.
" Him greatly I revere, nor dare despoil,
" Lest on my brow the deed unjust recoil.
" Yet e'en to Argos would I guide thy course
" O'er sea and land, and force repell by force."

He spake: and in the chariot took his stand,
And seiz'd the scourge with an impatient hand.
And in the mules and coursers deign'd inspire
Strength not their own, and force of heav'nly fire.
Then at the fosse and tow'rs the guardians found,
Now at their evening meal assembled round.

By Hermes still'd, while all in sleep repos'd,
The god drew back the bars, and gates unclos'd;
And guiding on the monarch, inly brought
The car with Hector's ransom richly fraught.
Then to the tent of great Achilles came,
Whose wider amplitude, and loftier frame,
To grace their king his Myrmidons had made,
With trunks of pine on pine in order laid,
And, from the marshes, for the shelt'ring roof,
Mow'd many a reed, and firmly rear'd aloof,
And compassing the court's wide spreading bound,
Girt it with fence of thickest stakes around.
One bar, a pine, immense in size and weight,
From free intrusion fenc'd the guarded gate,
Three Greeks alone, with all their strength amain,
Could draw it back, or forward force again:
Achilles singly heav'd it.—There the god
Gave Priam entrance to the chief's abode.
There the rich gifts to free the corse convey'd,
Leapt from the car, and thus to Priam said:

" Hoar king, to guide and guard thee, kindly giv'n,
" I, Hermes, come, by Jove sent down from heav'n:
" Thence, back returning, wing from earth my flight,
" Nor stand confest before Achilles' sight.

" It fits not that a god of heav'nly birth,
" Such zeal should manifest for those on earth,
" Go—clasp his knees: by each warm feeling move,
" A father's reverence, and a mother's love,
" And fondness for his child." Then, swift in flight,
The god ascending, gain'd the Olympian height.

Then Priam downward leapt, and trusted there
The mules and coursers to Idæus' care,
And with unswerving step right onward went,
Where sat the Jove-lov'd chief within his tent,
His comrades all apart. Two there alone,
A hero fam'd in war, Automedon,
And Alcimus to serve the table stood,
Where Peleus' son but now had ceas'd from food,
They saw not Priam as he enter'd lone,
And prostrate at the feet of Peleus' son
His knees embrac'd, and to his pale lip prest
Those blood-stain'd hands that pierc'd his children's breast.
As when a murderer, for his crime pursu'd,
Who, with a native's recent blood embru'd,
Mid a far region gains a stately roof,
All at his entrance gaze, and stand aloof:
On Priam's entrance thus Achilles gaz'd,
And all, each other eying, stood amaz'd.

" Think on thy sire"—he said—" O chief divine!
" Such as I am: his life's sad close, like mine.
" He, haply, too, while neighbouring foes infest,
" Looks round in vain, nor finds on whom to rest.
" But that thou yet surviv'st, if Peleus hear,
" He, in the light of hope forgets all fear,
" And ever, day by day, expects once more
" To clasp his son upon his native shore.
" But I, most wretched, I, of many a son,
" Most brave in Troy, of these behold not one.
" Full fifty sons, ere here the Grecians came,
" Made glad my bosom with a father's name:
" Nineteen from one chaste nuptial bed, the rest
" From many a fair, my fond embraces blest:
" Of these, the greater part, in battle slain,
" Lie in their blood upon their native plain.
" But he, that one, Troy's guardian, lately dead,
" Him thou hast slain, who for his country bled,
" Hector—For whom I now approach thy fleet,
" And lay these gifts, his ransom, at thy feet.
" But thou, respect the gods—Achilles! hear!
" Oh! call to mind thy sire, and me revere:
" While I, most wretched of man's wretched birth,
" Now at thy feet thus prostrated on earth,
" Have borne to do what mortal ne'er has done,
" And to my lip uprais'd his hand who slew my son!"

That woe, that form allay'd Pelides' ire,
And to his heart recall'd his helpless sire,
And aw'd by reverence for that head belov'd,
Took Priam's hand, and from him gently mov'd
That aged man, who, bow'd in hopeless woe,
Rememb'ring Hector, gave his tears to flow.
Now for his sire warm tears Pelides shed,
Now wept in change of woe Patroclus dead.
Groan echo'd groan: but when o'erwearied grief,
In pause of satiate misery found relief,
He rose, clasp'd Priam's hand, and kindly rear'd,
In pity of his age, and snow-white beard:

"Ah! hapless man!"—him thus the chief addrest—
"What hast thou borne? what anguish rack'd thy breast?
"That thou hast dar'd, mid Grecia's fleet, alone
"Thus front the slayer of so many a son.
"Steel'd is thy heart.—Yet—here by me repose;
"And let us cease, tho' griev'd, to weep our woes.
"Ah! nought avails interminable grief:
"The groan that heaves the heart yields no relief.
"Such the dire lot by gods to mortals giv'n:
"Woe walks the world, but bliss abides in heav'n.
"Two urns stand ever at the throne of Jove,
"This showers down good, that evil, from above.

" He, to whom Jove their mixture has decreed,
" Sees good and evil, turn by turn succeed:
" On whom Jove evil rains, he rues his birth,
" Incessant misery drives the wretch o'er earth,
" To all alike a stranger unendear'd,
" By gods ne'er honour'd, nor by man rever'd.
" To Peleus thus the gods great gifts assign'd,
" And from his birth enrich'd beyond mankind:
" Stretch'd o'er the Myrmidons his wide command,
" And to his human join'd a heav'nly hand.
" Yet heaven ordain'd that none from Peleus' bed
" Should wield his sceptre, when he join'd the dead.
" One only son was his: here I remain,
" And long to soothe his age, but long in vain:
" Here, from my native land I linger far,
" And pour on thee, and thine, the woes of war.
" Thou too—'twas said—in wealth wert highly blest,
" Beyond what Lesbus, Macar's seat, possest,
" Beyond the treasures that rich Phrygia bore,
" Or all on Hellespont's wide-spreading shore:
" O'er these, long time, thou held'st the highest place
" For countless riches, and a numerous race.
" But since on thee, the gods this evil bound,
" Wars and perpetual death gird Troy around:—
" Yet—bear it;—nor thus hopelessly resign'd
" To grief and bitter misery yield thy mind—

" These profit not: they cannot raise the dead:
" Ere then—another woe shall bow thy head."

" Not now"—the Monarch said—" not here my seat,
" While Hector lies unburied mid your fleet.
" Quick, quick release him: to my arms restore:
" Give me to look upon my son once more.
" These, his rich ransom take, and long enjoy,
" Long in thy native realm return'd from Troy,
" Since thou hast thus endur'd me in thy sight,
" And suffer'd living to behold the light."

" Why"—sternly eyeing, Peleus' son rejoin'd—
" Why thus impatient, irritate my mind—
" Urge me no more importunately: cease:
" I too incline the body to release:
" Sprung from an ancient sea-god, to my tent,
" Thus Thetis warn'd me, by Saturnius sent.
" I know that, mid our fleet, thy guide a god,
" Or ne'er within my tent thy foot had trod.
" For not in hardihood of youthful year
" Dar'd mortal thus within our camp appear,
" Or could have 'scap'd the watch, or heav'd the weight
" Of the enormous bar that guards my gate.

" But calm thy mind, nor by such grief once more
" Rouse my keen woe, too keenly felt before:
" Lest from my tent I send thee back again,
" And scorn the suppliant, and Jove's word disdain."

Thus spake the chief, and by his speech dismay'd,
In trembling silence Ilion's king obey'd:—
Then, like a lion, swiftly from his tent
Pelides rush'd, and with their soverign went
Automedon, and Alcimus, alone
By him most honour'd, now Patroclus gone.
They from the yoke the steeds and mules unloos'd,
And Priam's clear-voic'd herald introduc'd,
And kindly seating, from the litter brought
The gifts with Hector's ransom richly fraught:
But left two mantles and a well-wrought vest
To veil, when borne to Troy, the hero's breast.
Their chief then bad his maids anoint and lave
The corse of Hector with the cleansing wave,
Apart from Priam, lest, if seen, the sire,
Should in his grief no longer curb his ire;
So rouse Achilles' rage, and force his hand
To slay him, reckless of Jove's high command.
Now lav'd, anointed now, and finish'd all,
O'er him they drew the vest and decent pall.

Achilles on the bier the body laid,
By his attendants to the car convey'd.
Then Peleus' son his lov'd Patroclus nam'd,
And thus with heartfelt groan aloud exclaim'd:

" Tho' mid the dead, Patroclus, not in ire
" Hear that I yield great Hector to his sire:
" No trivial gifts his ransom'd corse redeem;
" Share these, and all my treasures thine esteem."

Then Peleus' son, returning to his tent,
Back to his seat, oppos'd to Priam's, went;
And thus the king addrest: " Time-honour'd sire,
" Now is thy son releas'd at thy desire:
" He lies upon his bier: at dawn of day
" Thyself shall view him, and to Troy convey.
" Now feast we—not in grief's severest mood
" The bright-hair'd Niobe forgot her food—
" O'er twelve slain children gush'd the mother's tear,
" Six sons, six daughters in youth's blooming year;
" These felt the vengeance of Apollo's bow,
" And Dian's arrows laid the daughters low,
" Enrag'd that Niobe had rashly dar'd,
" And to Latona's self herself compar'd:
" Said—' Two had blest Latona's, twelve her bed'—
" Hence by the immortal twins twelve mortals bled.

" Nine days they lay in blood, untomb'd, alone,
" For Jove that nation had transform'd to stone:
" On the tenth day the gods the dead entomb'd,
" And Niobe, woe-weary'd, food resum'd.
" Now mid the rocks in Sipylus' desert mounts,
" Where haunt—'tis said—the nymphs who fill the founts,
" And dance round Achelous, there, tho' stone,
" She feeds on woe, and weeps her children gone.
" Then let us, like that mourner, king of Troy,
" Our cares awhile on needful food employ:
" And thou, when homeward borne, weep Hector dead,
" A son well worth the tear that childless fathers shed."

He spake, and slew a sheep of snowy fleece,
Th' attendants flay'd, and scor'd it piece by piece,
With spits transfix'd, and roasting every part,
Nicely withdrew, and serv'd with graceful art.
Automedon the table duly fed
From beauteous baskets amply stor'd with bread:
Achilles carv'd the flesh: they shar'd the feast:
And now when satiate thirst and hunger ceas'd,
The Dardan king admir'd Pelides' height,
Grace, grandeur, beauty, like a god in sight,
And Peleus' son with admiration hung
On Priam's awful mien and polish'd tongue;

But when their mutual wonder paus'd, the word
Of godlike Priam thus was foremost heard:

" Jove-lov'd, permit us now to seek repose,
" That I once more in sleep my eyelids close:
" Ne'er yet, since Hector fell beneath thy pow'r,
" My eyes have shar'd sweet slumber's soothing hour:
" But still I groan, and feed with grief my soul,
" And mid my court in dust and ashes roll.
" Now I have shar'd thy food, and drank thy wine,
" But none till now, since Hector perish'd, mine."

The chief then bad his females duely spread
For either guest beneath his porch a bed,
There cast bright purple rugs, and o'er it strow
Tapestry, and woollen mantles white as snow.
Forth went the maids, the torches in their hand,
And spread the couches at their lord's command:
Then Peleus' son, with simulated dread,
Thus to the time-grac'd monarch subtly said:

" Lie thou without the tent, my guest belov'd,
" Lest here some chief, on consultation mov'd,
" May, as oft custom'd, make to me appeal,
" And seek my counsel for the public weal;

" If haply such at night espy thee here,
" Swift would the rumour reach Atrides' ear,
" And Hector's corse be staid. But tell me, sire,
" What days thy Hector's funeral rites require ?
" That I so long from battle may abstain,
" And the fierce ardour of the host restrain."

" Since thou consent'st that I," the king rejoin'd,
" Those rites absolve, most grateful to my mind ;—
" Troy girds us round : far off each wooded height,
" And Ilion's sons sore dread th' invader's might.
" Nine days at home we mourn, the tenth inhume,
" And with the public banquet grace the tomb,
" On high th' Hectorean mound the eleventh rear :
" The twelfth—if war must rage—spear clash on spear."

" Be this," Pelides said, " at thy desire,
" Twelve days I calm the host's invading ire."

He spake, and clasp'd his hand, lest, sore dismay'd,
Perplexing fear his timorous age invade.
Then in the porch where either couch was spread,
The king and herald laid in peace their head.
But in his tent's recess the chief, at rest,
The fair Briseis in his arms carest.

Now all the gods and chiefs throughout the night
Enjoy'd in peace still slumber's soft delight;
But not the friend of man, kind Hermes, slept,
The anxious god perpetual vigils kept;
Mus'd how to Troy the king unseen convey,
Hung o'er his brow, and thus was heard to say:

" Thou reck'st not life, while thus amid thy foes
" Now, by Achilles' will, thou dar'st repose:
" Much thou for Hector gav'st, yet threefold more,
" Thee to their arms, thee living, to restore,
" Thy sons must give, should Agamemnon learn,
" Or his fierce host thy presence here discern."

Thus Hermes spake: and Priam at the close
Rous'd, terror-struck, the herald from repose.
The god the chariots yok'd, and all unseen
Swift drove them forth, the ships and tents between.

But when they reach'd the ford where Xanthus, bred
From highest Jove, whirl'd down his eddying bed,
When saffron-mantled morn wide spread her light,
The god, up-soaring, gain'd th' Olympian height.
To Troy they drove the steeds with loud lament,
While the mules, charg'd with Hector's body, went.

But of Troy's sons, and zone-rob'd daughters, none
Mark'd their approach, save Priam's child alone,
Cassandra, beauteous as Love's golden queen,
Who, on the turret, from far distance seen,
Her father standing in his chariot view'd,
And with keen gaze Idæus' car pursu'd;
And, as she saw the body on the bier,
Flew, shrieking, thro' the streets, and fill'd all Troy with fear:

"Ye sons of Troy! ye daughters, hither come,
"Look on your Hector carry'd to his home,
"If e'er, from war return'd, one shout of joy
"Hail'd him alive, the guardian god of Troy."

She spake: nor man nor woman there remain'd,
All left the town, for all one woe sustain'd;
None linger'd there, but thro' th' o'ercrowded gate
Rush'd forth to meet and mourn their hapless fate.
First his lov'd wife and reverend mother flew,
Rush'd to the car that lifeless Hector drew,
Pluck'd up their hair, and scattering on the dead,
Bow'd o'er the body as they clasp'd his head.
All wept, and thro' the day, till twilight close,
Before the portal ne'er had ceased their woes,

Had not the king exclaim'd, " Fall back! Give way!
" Hence! Let the mules the body home convey;
" There, when beneath his roof it lies at rest,
" Satiate with tears each grief o'erburden'd breast."

He spake: none dar'd the monarch disobey,
But backward yielding, gave the litter way.
Now borne beneath his roof, they plac'd elate
The corse of Hector on a bed of state,
And near him rang'd the bards, whose tuneful breath
Chaunted the dirge that mourn'd his hapless death.
They mournful sung, and, echo'd back again,
The wailing of the women swell'd the strain.
Mid these Andromachè began the woe,
Clasp'd Hector's head, and gave her grief to flow.

" My husband! Thou in prime of life art gone,
" And left me here to mourn thy loss alone,
" And our sad love's sole fruit, in infant year,
" Whom ne'er his mother shall to manhood rear.
" Ah! ere that hour, the vengeance of her foe
" Shall lay in dust the tow'rs of Ilion low,
" For thou art gone, whose arm alone could save
" Troy, her chaste wives, and children from the grave—
" These soon, borne hence athwart the boundless deep,
" And I with them, shall, doom'd to slavery, weep:

" Thou too, my child, with me in shameful toil
" Shall serve a tyrant on a stranger soil:
" Or some harsh Greek shall grasp, in wrathful hour,
" Thy tender hand, and from the topmost tow'r
" Whirl thee to death, in vengeance of the dead,
" Sire, son, or brother, who by Hector bled.
" For many a Grecian felt his fatal wound,
" And, pierc'd by Hector, bit in death the ground.
" For not in war thy father check'd the blow;
" Hence spreads o'er Troy one universal woe.
" Hector! thy death has pierc'd thy parent's soul,
" Mine, woe without a name, without controul:
" Thou didst not press my hand to thine in death,
" Thou didst not say farewell with falt'ring breath,
" Words that thy wife would day and night recall,
" And soothe the bitter tears they cause to fall."

She weeping spake: the maidens groan'd around,
When Hecuba thus pour'd her woe profound:

" Hector! son most belov'd! more lov'd, far more
" Than all thy brethren whom I hapless bore.
" Son! dear to every god while life was thine,
" And dear in death to every pow'r divine.
" My other sons Achilles spar'd, and sold,
" And barter'd whom he captur'd, life for gold:

" To Samos some, to Imbrus o'er the deep,
" Or doom'd mid Lemnos' barren rocks to weep.
" But when his spear's keen point thy blood had shed,
" He dragg'd thee oft around Patroclus dead,
" Yet him reviv'd not: but, tho' ceas'd thy breath,
" Thou liest, fresh, fragrant, beautiful in death,
" Thou liest like him, whom Phœbus' gentle dart
" Has touch'd, and still'd in peaceful death his heart."

She, weeping, spake. Grief fell on all around:
Then Helen thus breath'd forth her plaintive sound:

" Hector, to Helen's soul more lov'd than all
" Whom I in Ilion's walls dare brother call,
" Since Paris here to Troy his consort led,
" Who in the grave had found a happier bed.
" 'Tis now, since here I came, the twentieth year,
" Since left my land, and all I once held dear:
" But never from that hour has Helen heard
" From thee a harsh reproach, or painful word;
" But if thy kindred blam'd me, if unkind
" The queen e'er glanc'd at Helen's fickle mind,—
" For Priam, still benevolently mild,
" Look'd on me as a father views his child,—
" Thy gentle speech, thy gentleness of soul
" Would by thine own their harsher minds controul.

" Hence, with a heart by torturing misery rent,
" Thee and my hapless self I thus lament,
" For no kind eye in Troy on Helen rests,
" But who beholds me shudders and detests."

She, weeping, spake. Groans burst from every breast:
When Priam thus Troy's sorrowing sons addrest:

" Haste, Trojans, to yon woods—heap load on load,
" Nor dread the Greeks in ambush on your road:
" Pelides' self, at my departure, said,
" ' Till the twelfth morn no Greek should Troy invade.' "

They yok'd the steers and mules, and many a wain
Met at the gates, and rang'd their ready train.
Nine days they gather'd in th' immense supply,
And when the tenth bright morn illum'd the sky
Brought, weeping, forth, and on the topmost pyre
Rear'd Hector's corse, and compass'd round with fire.

At dawn of day Troy's congregated race
Swell'd the slow pomp their Hector's rites to grace.
All met: and first they quench'd with wine the pyre,
Far as the range of the consuming fire;

His brethren then, and friends, with heart-felt groans
And ceaseless tears, amass'd his snowy bones;
Then safe repos'd them in an urn of gold,
Wrapt in soft mantles of purpureal fold:
In a deep fosse depos'd, and, o'er it strown,
Heap'd the huge mound, high-heaving stone o'er stone:
Yet quickly rais'd, while guards kept watch around,
Lest unawares the Greeks their rites confound.
The mound thus heap'd, the host, from toil releas'd,
In Priam's palace shar'd the burial feast.

Such were the rites, and thus their labour clos'd,
When valiant Hector in the tomb repos'd!

THE END.

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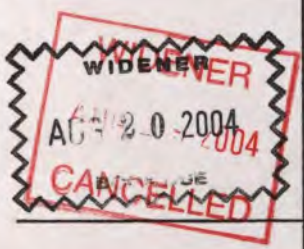




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